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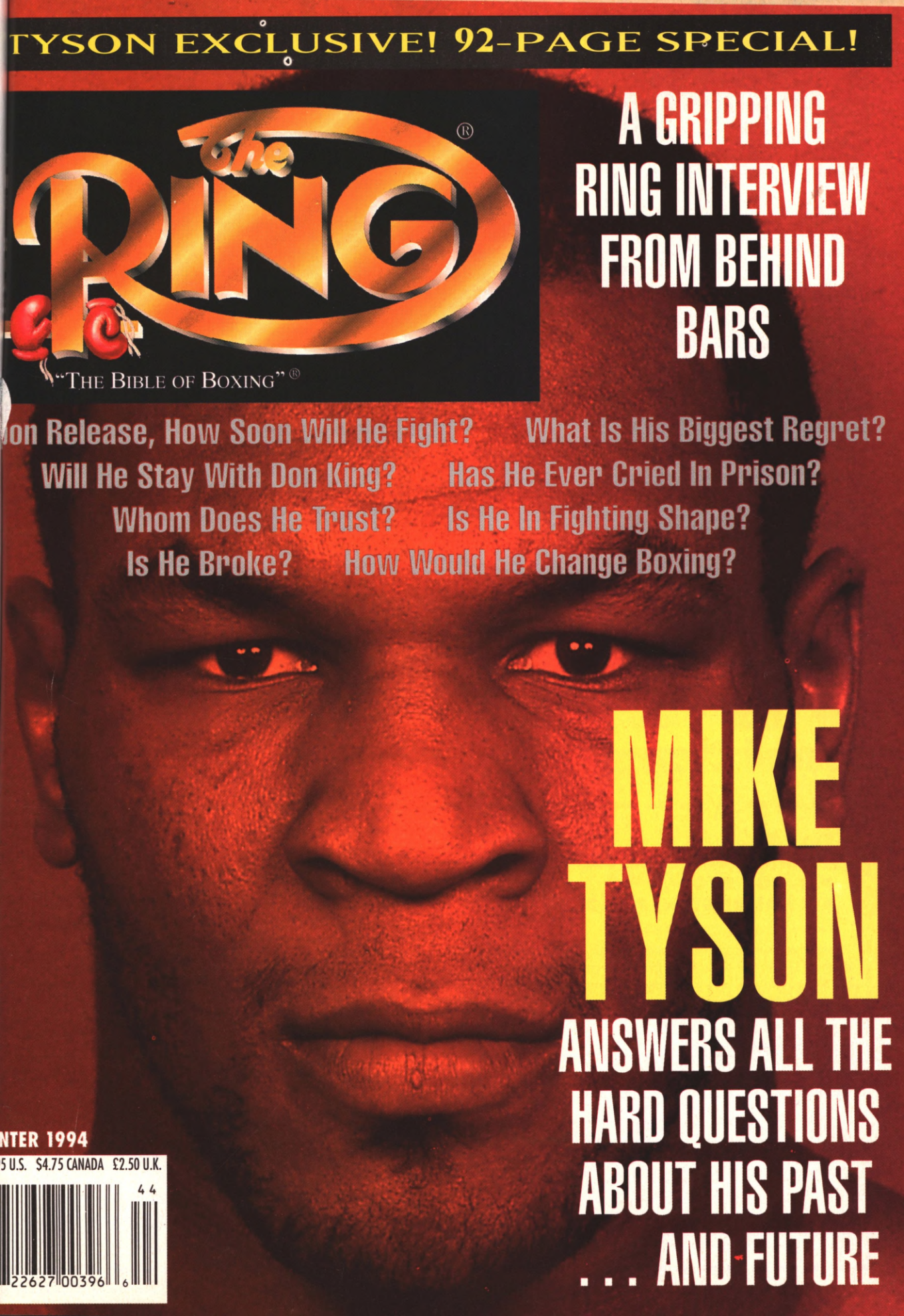

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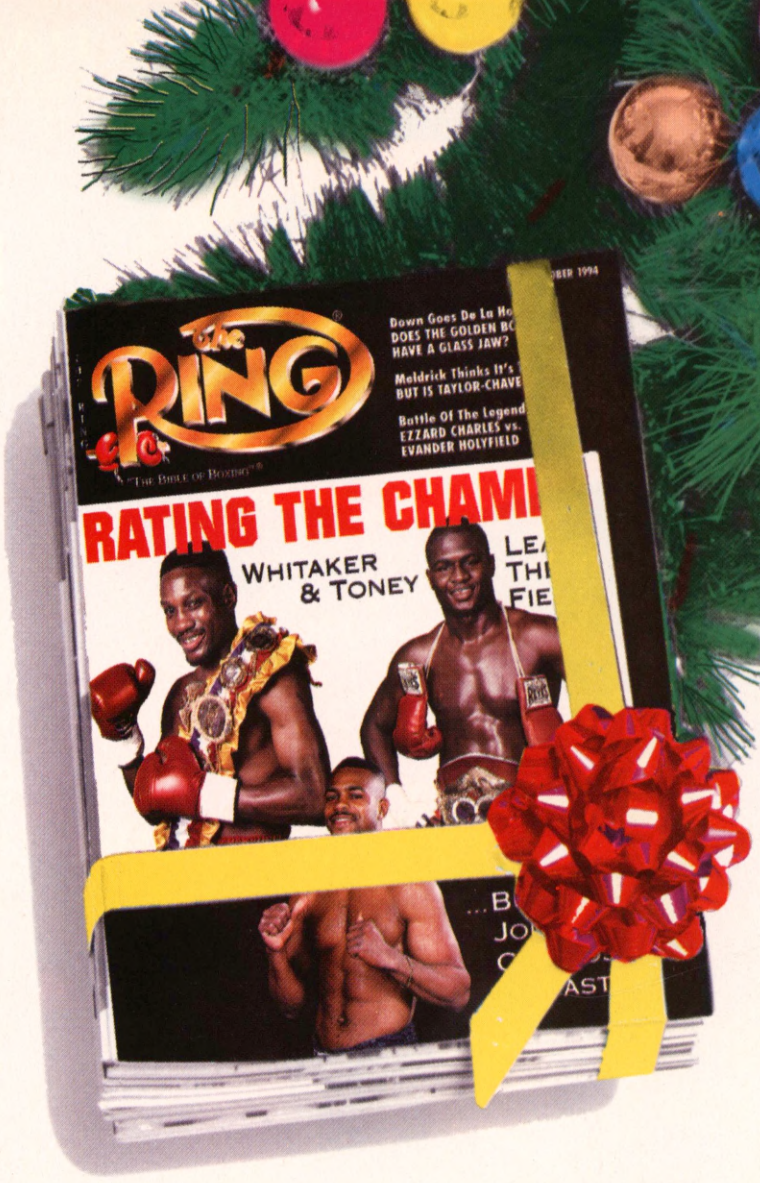

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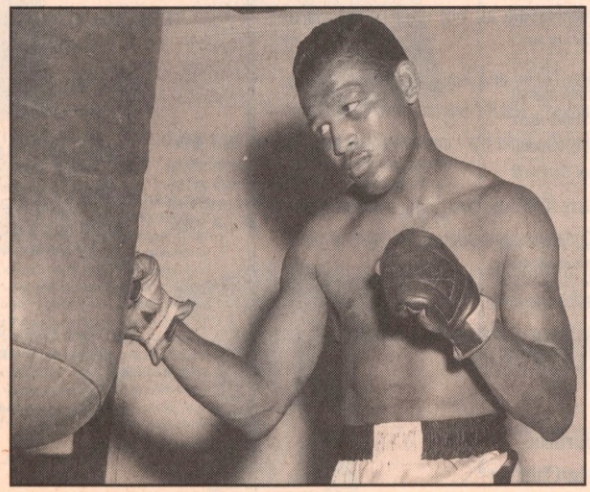

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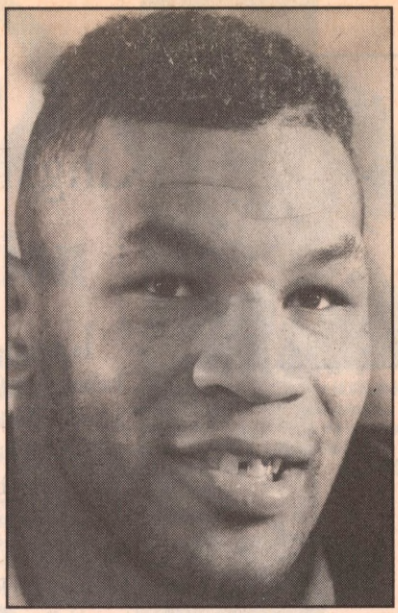

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Ringside

In the three years Mike Tyson has been incarcerated at the Indiana Youth Center, he's received dozens of visitors and given a handful of interviews. It is fitting, I suppose, that Tyson's first interview with the *boxing* media was granted to THE RING. The 72-year-old publication remains "The Bible Of Boxing," and as Tyson, a ring historian, told us, "When people want to know 100 years from now what Mike Tyson was thinking at this time in his life, they could find out by reading THE RING."

THE RING's association with Tyson dates back to the mid-'80s. In the February 1986 issue, the editor of THE RING, Nigel Collins, featured "Iron Mike" on the cover for the first time and wrote the accompanying story. I wrote the first Tyson story in *KO*, THE RING's sister publication, and in 1985, when Tyson nearly decapitated his eighth pro victim, stringbean cruiserweight Michael Jack Johnson, I provided the analysis for SportsChannel America. It was the first Tyson fight to be nationally televised. I interviewed Tyson both before and after that fight, and to suggest his life has since been eventful is like saying 1994 has been an unusually busy year for O.J. Simpson.

During Tyson's time in prison, he developed a relationship with THE RING's vice president of marketing, Dave Gerhardt, and then with publisher and fellow historian Stanley Weston. In August, Gerhardt and Weston visited Tyson, and that meeting led to Collins' behind-bars interview *(see page 35)*.

While it is a dark and disillusioned Tyson that emerges ("I hate everybody"), his talk with Collins provided a final answer to an oft-asked question: Tyson will indeed return to the ring—and, I'm happy to report, THE RING as well.

***

It was hokey as hell, and Bob Arum knew it, but the promoter nonetheless brought out the dancing girls at the press conference to hype November 18's IBF super middleweight title fight between James Toney and Roy Jones. Simply put, Toney-Jones has the makings to be Fight of the Year *(see page 20)*. The stakes are staggering: Not only will the winner likely be named Fighter of the Year, but also the best fighter, pound-for-pound, in the world. Why, then, Arum wondered aloud, had the media all but ignored the press conference?

Blame it on bad taste. That and the fact that when Toney and Jones took their turns at the microphone, they spoke for about 30 seconds apiece. Hasn't anyone told these guys that when you're performing for a percentage, fighting the fight isn't enough? You have to sell it, too.

Interestingly, though Toney is considered by many to be the best fighter in the game, and it is Jones who is moving up in weight, the oddsmakers have opened the fight at pick-'em. Most of the insiders I've polled like Toney. I'll go with Jones. He'll have to raise his game, but we can't be sure just how good he is. If Toney wins, he'll play monster and force Jones into survival mode. If Jones wins, he'll prove superior of both speed and power.

Six years after being jobbed in Seoul, Jones will get the job done.

Steve Farhood
Editor-in-Chief

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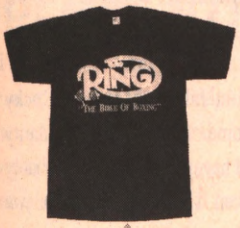

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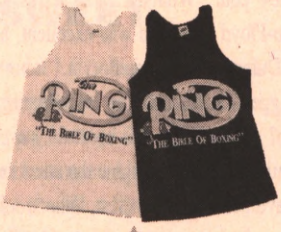

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Come Out Writing

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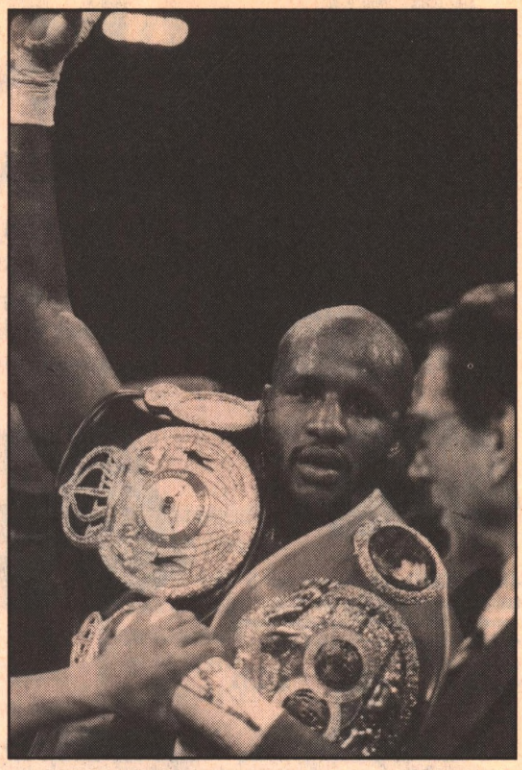
VULNERABLE TITLIST?

Let's get a few things straight: Michael Moorer easily defeated Evander Holyfield to win the heavyweight title, as "The Real Deal" was simply too ring-worn to compete. At his best, however, Evander would have overwhelmed Moorer. In light of this fact, how can anyone take the reign of the new champion seriously, especially when Holyfield himself ranks modestly in comparison to the titlists of the past?

The IBF/WBA champion is the most vulnerable titlist the division has seen since the reigns of fighters like Mike Weaver, Gerrie Coetzee, and Greg Page. Since that era, there hasn't been a single heavyweight champion who could be rated below Moorer.



Will Moorer be wearing the belts much longer?

Moorer's unimpressive skills and lazy attitude make me wonder why your magazine ranks him above WBC champion Lennox Lewis. I suppose Moorer is the man who beat the man, and as such he should be considered the legitimate champion. But that doesn't mean he'd have a chance in hell of beating the Englishman. I'd make Lewis a 3-1 favorite to win that bout.

PAUL MINNIS
Haubstadt, IN

LaMotta and Graziano once signed to fight, but the bout was canceled

WHAT IF ... ?

I enjoy your "What If ... ?" series on fights that never happened. Rocky Marciano-Floyd Patterson was excellent, as was Jack Dempsey-Harry Wills and Roberto Duran-Alexis Arguello.

A suggestion for a future installment: How about Jake LaMotta vs. Rocky Graziano? At one point, this bout was supposed to come off. Given the popularity of both middleweights, imagine the attention it would have drawn. And it probably would have been a real slugfest. Who would have won? That's a question for *you* to ponder.

JAMES WOOLWINE
Roanoke, VA

HISTORY WON'T REPEAT

After finishing Eric Karabell's story on Lennox Lewis in your September '94 issue ("British To A Fault: The Relaxed Reign Of Lennox Lewis"), I was pleased to finally read something positive about the best heavyweight in the world.

Being nice, classy, and quiet has never helped a fighter become marketable,

and maybe Lewis' problem is strictly one of image. While it's true Lewis won the WBC title out of a trash can, he has been far more impressive in his rise to the top than people realize. He blasted out Razor Ruddock, which Mike Tyson failed to do. He outboxed Tony Tucker, flooring him twice and beating a boxer at his own game. He came from behind to stop his spirited countryman, Frank Bruno, and he kayoed the unknown but dangerous Phil Jackson.

Let's face it: Every heavyweight who follows a legend such as Tyson or Ali has had a difficult struggle to respectability. Lewis is no exception. And as far as the history of British heavyweights repeating itself, forget it. Lewis is no Joe Bugner, Henry Cooper, or Bruno.

Impressed with Lewis? Yes, I am!

PAUL LAZZATI
Baltimore, MD

CALL OFF THE COLLECTORS

As usual, Ed Brophy and his staff did one hell of a job at the International Boxing Hall of Fame induction weekend in Canastota, New York. And, as usual, the boxers were friendly and approachable for a chat or an autograph.

There was only one thing that stopped it from being a perfect weekend. Every year a group of collectors attaches itself to the boxers like glue. These collectors follow the big names everywhere and have even been seen lurking outside the fighters' hotels in the wee hours. This is spoiling things for the real fans, who just want to meet the fighters and perhaps get a quick autograph or photo.

I'm sure these collectors aren't paying the boxers for their signatures. I discussed the situation with a couple of the fighters who are regulars at the induction weekend, and they're getting tired of these people, too. To all the collectors (they know who they are): Give it a rest and let the rest of us enjoy the company of the boxers, too. You have your annual collector's show, so let us have the rest of the weekend.

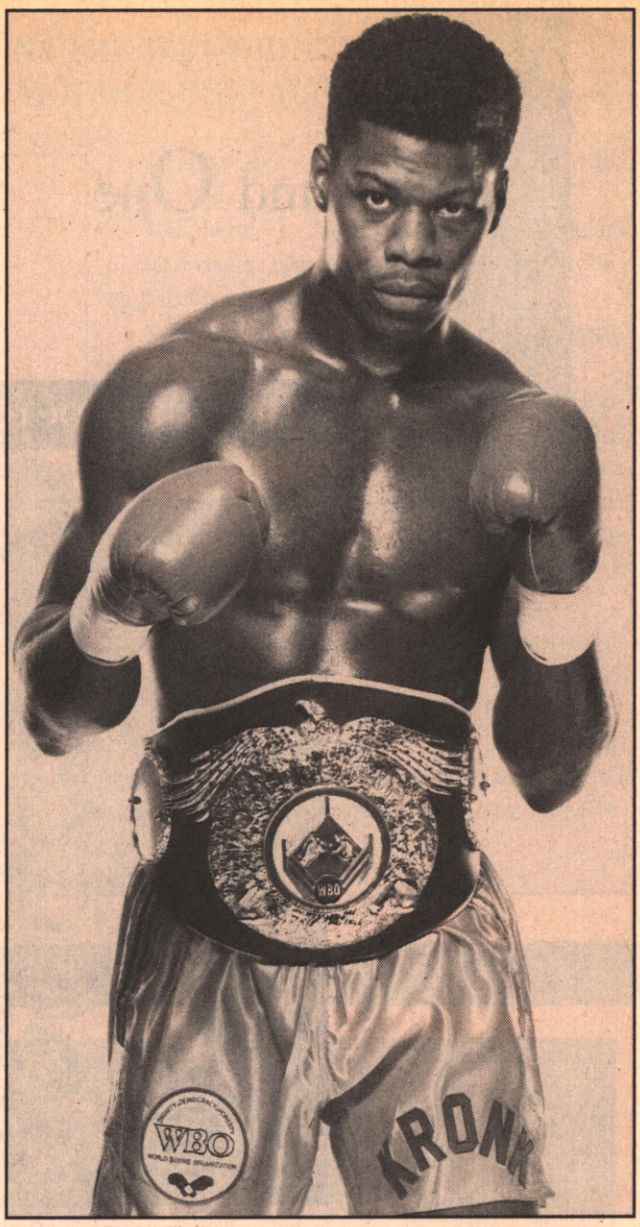
DAVID DeCARLO
Beverly, MA

HOLMES STILL SWEET

I'm sick and tired of the unfair treatment Larry Holmes has been receiving. When Muhammad Ali was champion, he gave novice Leon Spinks a title fight ahead of the more deserving Holmes. The WBA never recognized Holmes as champion, even though he stopped Ali and dominated the division for six years. And now IBF/WBA champion Michael Moorer is giving George Foreman a shot, even though Big George lost his last fight to Tommy Morrison more than a year ago. Furthermore, Foreman has been ducking Holmes ever since beginning his comeback. Is there a conspiracy against Holmes or what? I don't blame him for being bitter.

Look at Holmes' record and physical attributes. He clearly ranks among the four greatest heavyweights in history, behind only Ali, Joe Louis, and Rocky Marciano. It's not too late to start playing fair and rewarding fighters for their accomplishments rather than their personalities.

JOHN TREPTE
Watertown, WI



Barber has been active—but not on television

THE INVISIBLE MAN

I remember watching Leeonzer Barber beat Anthony Hembrick on cable-TV a couple of years back. The announcers said he was part of the future of the Kronk gym. Emanuel Steward has always handled high-profile fighters, but I've heard nothing of Barber since his win over Hembrick. Is he still a member of the Kronk team? I see he's still rated by THE RING, but has he been active? And if he's been fighting, has he been taking on legitimate opposition or hand-picked stiffs?

CARLTON SAPITAN
Chicago, IL

Editor's Note: Barber has indeed been active. Since edging Hembrick in January 1992, he's topped, among others, Mike Sedillo, Andrea Magi, and Nicky Piper. Most of his fights have been in Europe. ■

Round One

THE FIGHT DOCTOR'S UNIQUE GOODBYE

Ring announcer Frank Freeman

Frank Freeman, part of the golden years of Miami Beach boxing, died on July 30. He was 85.

A handful of mourners bid farewell at Mount Nebo Memorial Gardens to the man who had been Miami's voice of boxing for three decades. I stood in a blazing sun, a few feet behind two rows of chairs. The mourners, who were old friends and relatives, squinted at the plain pine box with a solitary Star of David carved on the lid.

A young man read some notes. From what I gathered, Frank was the only celebrity in the family, a cheerful uncle, and a fountain of laughs. Then, abruptly, it was over. Frank was leaving us without much fanfare, and on a serious note. It didn't seem enough. It didn't seem fair.

I can never speak at funerals. I get too choked up. But I stepped to the casket, identified myself as an old friend and colleague, and launched into a story I had just written for a book on boxing humor.

We were in the Fifth Street Gym shooting a two-hour special on the 25th anniversary of the Clay-Liston fight in Miami Beach. NBC had sent down the A-team, and we were interviewing everyone. I called Frank, who had been the ring announcer that historic night.

He sat in front of the camera, spiffy as usual, a little nervous, but raring to go. At 79, Frank was clear-headed and still possessed the ability to tell a story.

The camera's red light went on, indicating we were taping. I started. "Frank, what was the greatest event you ever participated in?"

Frank's eyes got big. He balked. He froze.

"Cut. Do it again," said the producer, David Neal.

Again I asked. Again he balked.

The director looked at his watch. We had a long way to go. Frank indicated he was ready. I came up with an idea that would seemingly solve the problem. I would phrase the answer into a question, and all Frank would have to do is say yes.

The red light came on.

"Frank, was the Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston fight of February 25, 1964, the greatest event of your life?"

Frank dropped his eyes, as if stunned by the question. Then his head popped up. He put his finger in the air and said, "No, World War II was bigger."

"Cut. Print. Thanks a lot, sir."

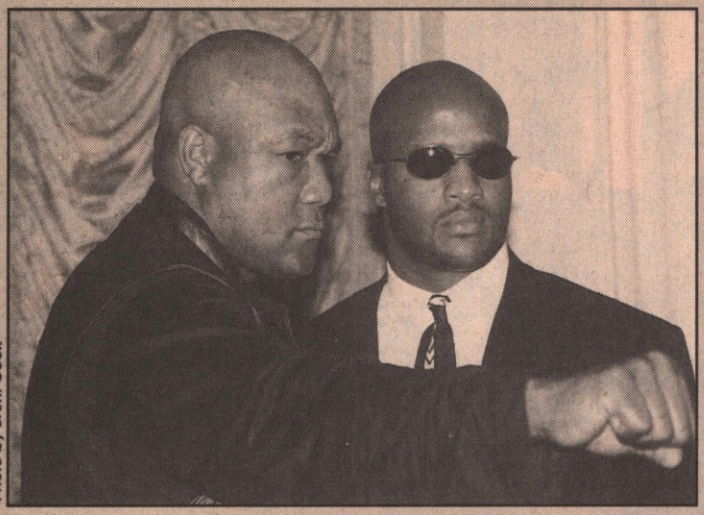
The assembled family and friends gave an appreciative laugh, and I stepped away, patting the plain pine box.

"There's your laugh, Frank. Goodbye."

They slid Frank into his crypt, and I felt much better. I only wished Sonny, Sully, Sellout Mo, Chris, Richie, Angie, and the boys of the Fifth Street Gym could have been there to bid Frank Freeman a final 10-count.

–Dr. Ferdie Pacheco

THE 10 REAL REASONS THE WBA DIDN'T WANT TO SANCTION MOORER-FOREMAN



Foreman-Moorer: The fight the WBA didn't want

10. The head honchos found out Big George's promised discount on mufflers had been greatly exaggerated.

9. The ratings committee decided a top 10 featuring Joe Hipp, Buster Mathis Jr., and Foreman would jiggle too much.

8. Foreman refused to deliver a percentage of his Social Security checks.

7. If Moorer went through with it, the championship committee could strip him and, for the good of the game, clear a path for the people's champion, Tony Tucker.

6. The alphabet boys were afraid of what Foreman might do to, uh, what *Moorer* might do to *Foreman*.

5. Larry Holmes sabotaged the fight by threatening to continue his career or, worse yet, sing at next year's WBA convention.

4. For-the-good-of-the-game, part II: If Moorer fights someone else, Foreman will return to his HBO microphone and continue to offer clean, crisp, precise, insightful commentary.

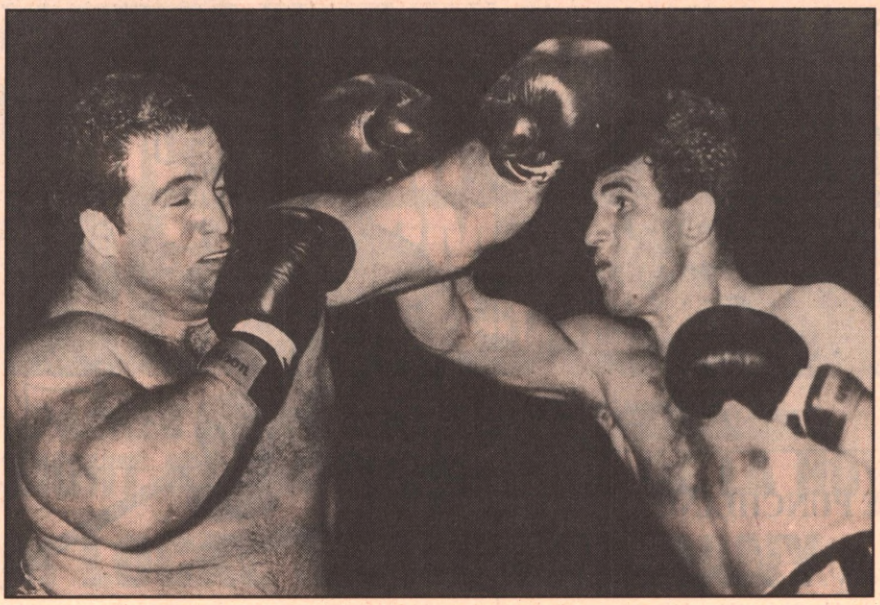
3. The organization's chief orthopedist recommended a Hipp replacement.

2. Big George couldn't beat Tommy Morrison, who couldn't beat Ross Puritty, so there was a good chance Foreman wouldn't be able to make it up the ring stairs without assistance.

1. President Gilberto Mendoza had tickets for the Yanni concert the night of the fight.

PAUL ANDERSON, 1933-1994

On August 15, Paul Anderson, a weightlifting gold medalist at the 1956 Olympic Games, died in Vidalia, Georgia, of complications from a lengthy series of illnesses. He was 61.



Paul Anderson wards off Attilio Tondo

Billed as the world's strongest man, Anderson boxed and wrestled professionally after gaining legendary status as a weightlifter. In April 1960, the 5'9" muscleman scaled more than 300 pounds for his pro boxing debut, which came in Charlotte, North Carolina, against 195-pound Attilio Tondo, a prelim fighter who had lost seven of 10 pro bouts. Anderson managed to floor Tondo three times, then decelerated and was stopped in round three. One news report described the loser as out of breath and "wheezing like a wounded rhinoceros."

Anderson fought a couple of more bouts, then gave up The Sweet Science. For a man who once lifted a table loaded with 6,270 pounds of calibrated weights off the ground, it was the moving targets that gave him trouble.

–Mike Silver

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

On August 9, trainer and boxing historian **Willie O'Neill** died of a stroke in Philadelphia. He was 78. O'Neill trained, among others, former bantamweight champion **Jeff Chandler**. Team Chandler was a family affair: O'Neill's wife, **"KO Becky" O'Neill**, was the first woman to manage a world titlist ... The New Jersey Casino Control Commission banned **Don King** from promoting at the 12 casinos in Atlantic City. The suspension will remain in effect until wire fraud charges against King are resolved.

Jeff Chandler with "KO Becky" and Willie O'Neill in 1987

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

Carlos Mendoza, a nondescript welterweight, made New York State boxing history when his June 2 draw with Alberto Diaz was changed to a split decision win. After hearing testimony from Chick Hill, who said he had marked his scorecard incorrectly in three of the six rounds fought at Long Island's Huntington Hilton, the New York commission voted to alter the verdict.

The incident reminded veteran New York fight fans of the controversial Joey Giardello-Billy Graham battle in 1952. That bout was initially scored for Giardello, but commission chairman Robert Christenberry overturned the decision and awarded the victory to Graham. When the State Supreme Court got involved, Christenberry was overruled and Giardello had his win back.

So far, Diaz has not indicated that he'll seek legal action.

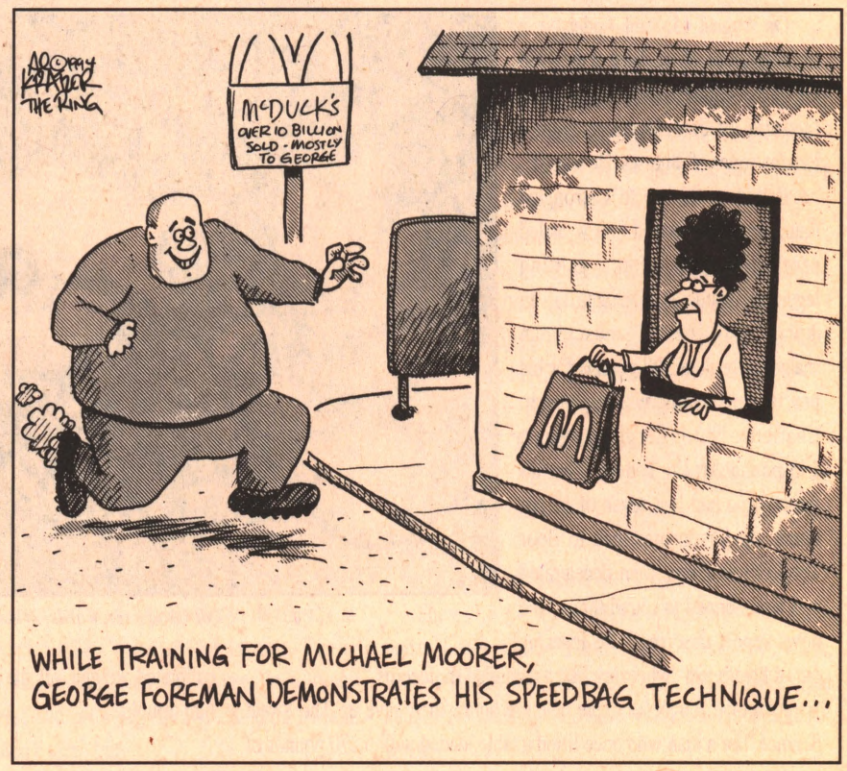
–Robert Cassidy

THE PUNCHLINE

"Today's managers have no balls. That's why fights like this aren't made."

–Jackie Kallen, manager of IBF super middleweight champion James Toney, on the November 18 showdown between Toney and Roy Jones

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



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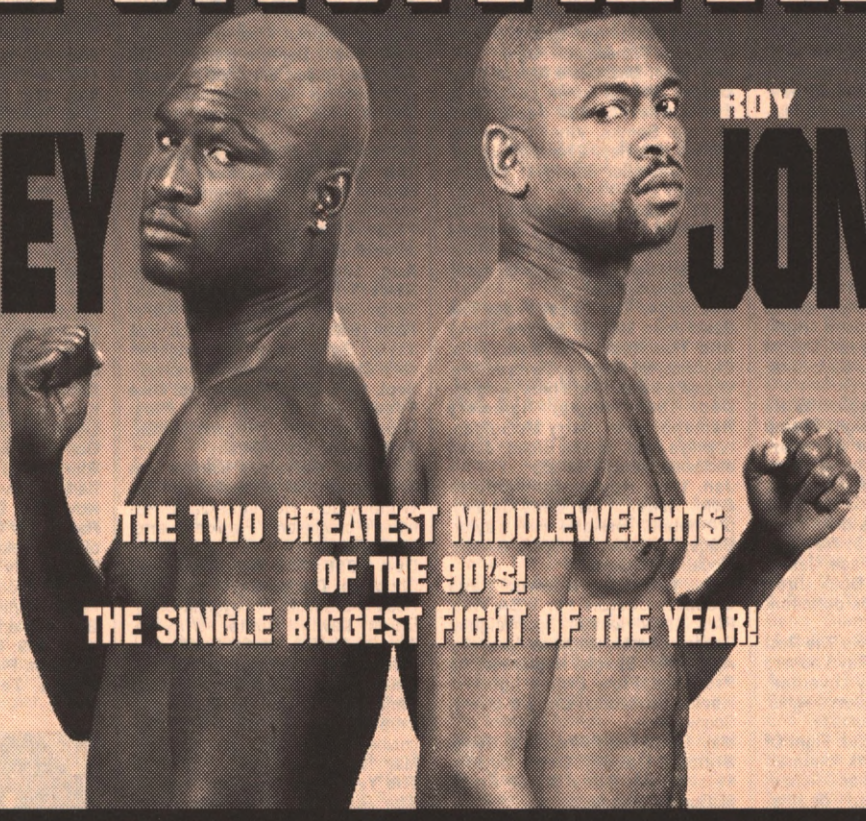
THE UNCIVIL WAR

JAMES **TONEY** vs ROY **JONES** JR



THE TWO GREATEST MIDDLEWEIGHTS OF THE 90's!
THE SINGLE BIGGEST FIGHT OF THE YEAR!

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Aug. 1981: Wilfred Benitez: Triple Crown Champ. Plus: Alexis Arguello, Roberto Duran, Henry Armstrong, Bob Fitzsimmons, Davey Moore, Benitez-Hope, Page-Evangelista, Hagler-Antuofermo II, Hamsho-Minter.

March 1982: Sanchez & Leonard: Fighters Of The Year! Plus: special year-end 100-page issue, fight, round, and upsets of year, Dwight Braxton, Benitez-Duran, Czyz-Sims, Pedroza-LaPorte.

May 1982: Marvin Hagler: Is He The Greatest Middleweight Champ Ever? Plus: Salvador Sanchez, southpaw boxers, Fletcher-Braxton, Arguello-Busceme, Primo Carnera, Max Baer.

July 1982: Leonard: Is It All Over For Sugar Ray? Plus: Ray and Lenny Mancini, Greg Page, James Kinchen, Coetzee-LeDoux, first-round knockouts, Jack Johnson, Tony Canzoneri.

Aug. 1982: Cooney: Is He The Real McCoy? Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard pinup, Holmes-Cooney coverage, Howard Davis, British heavyweights, Larry Holmes, Limon-Navarette.

Jan. 1983: Pryor-Arguello: Fight Of The Year. Plus: Frank "Animal" Fletcher, Dwight Braxton-Michael Spinks preview, ring deaths, Muhammad Ali.

Feb. 1983: Michael Dokes: Tainted Champion? Plus: Howard Cosell, Ray Mancini, Bum of the Month Club, Chacon-Limon.

March 1983: Larry Holmes: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: year in review, fight, round, and upsets of year, Bobby Chacon, Hector Camacho, Donald Curry, Milton McCrory, Duran-Laing.

April 1983: Randall "Tex" Cobb: Not Just Another Pretty Face. Plus: Hector Camacho, Carlos Monzon, Bob Foster, Charley Burley, Scypion-Fletcher, Mayweather-Serrano, Stanley Ketchel.

May 1983: Michael Spinks Wins It All. Plus: Spinks-Braxton color, Bob Arum, Marvin Hagler, Collins-LaPaglia.

Nov. 1983: Gerrie Coetzee: The New Heavyweight Champ Sets His Sights On Holmes. Plus: Alexis Arguello, Murray Sutherland, James J. Braddock, Muhammad Ali.

Feb. 1984: Don King Talks And Talks And Talks. Plus: Leonard's return, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, 1983 quotes, Marvin Hagler, Johnny Bratton, Gerald Hayes, Hagler-Duran color.

April 1984: Sugar Ray Leonard: "I'm Gonna Be Better Than Ever!" Plus: Ring's ratings of 8,000 fighters, Henry Armstrong, Don Lee, Koji Kobayashi, Mancini-Chacon (color).

June 1984: Bumphus, Lockridge, Duva: 'That Championship Year.' Plus: Ferdie Pacheco, Harry Arroyo, Holmes-Coetzee preview, Pipino Cuevas, Aaron Pryor, Battling Nelson-Joe Gans, Witherspoon-Page.

July 1984: Bazooka's Aim Is True: Gomez Shoots Down LaPorte In The Battle For San Juan. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Tyrone Crawley, Leonard's comeback, Chandler-Sandoval, Hagler-Roldan.

Sept. 1984: The Scramble For Bramble: Livingstone's Wrapped Up In Being A Champion. Plus: Hearns-Duran, Rosario-Davis, Aaron Pryor, Eusebio Pedroza.

Oct. 1984: The Beast From The East: John Mugabi Strikes Terror Into The Hearts Of Men. Plus: Olympics, Bill Costello, Davey Moore, Wilfred Benitez, King's heavyweights.

Dec. 1984: Hagler Hammers Hamsho. Plus: Barry McGuigan, boxing's best, James Broad, Julian Jackson, Pinklon Thomas.

Jan. 1985: Holmes-Bonecrusher Color Action. Plus: Gerry Cooney, pro debuts (Breland, Hill, Taylor, Biggs, Whitaker, Holyfield), Santos-Medal, Meza-Garza.

Feb. 1985: Showdown: Page Clobbers Coetzee For WBA Title. Plus: Larry Holmes, lightweights, Cooney-Chaplin, McCallum-Minchillo.

April 1985: Special Hagler-Hearns Program. Plus: British fighters, Hector Camacho, Donald Curry, Sonny Liston.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To The Ring Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

Feb. 1986: Mike Tyson: The Legacy Of Cus D'Amato. Plus: Rocky IV, Curry-McCrory, Teddy Mann, Kenny Lane.

April 1986: Witherspoon Tames Tubbs For WBA Title. Plus: Dream fights, Greg Haugen, Tyrell Biggs, Mark Breland, Paul Gonzales, HBO tourney, Witherspoon-Tubbs, Frank Warren, Gene Tunney.

May 1986: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Hearns-Shuler, Mike Tyson, Bramble-Crawley, Sandoval-Canizales, Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Arguello-Costello, Weaver-Williams.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Oct. 1986: Marvelous Marvin: Can Anyone Fill His Shoes? Plus: Tim Witherspoon, Holyfield-Qawi, Panama's champions, Frankie Duarte, Tyson-Frazier.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook Up The Boxing World. Plus: Rosario-Bramble, Honeyghan-Curry, Butch Lewis, Buster Drayton, Johnson-Emebe, *Raging Bull II*.

April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, *The Ring* annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new *Ring* ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Aug. 1987: Sugar Ray: Still In Style. Plus: Leonard-Hagler, all-time heavyweight ratings, Czyz-MacDonald, Camacho-Davis.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Oct. 1987: Special Hall Of Fame Issue: Ali Elected Unanimously! Plus: Hall of Fame directory, Spinks-Cooney, Pazienza-Haugen II, Aaron Pryor.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn-Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

June 1988: Sugar Ray Robinson Still The Sweetest! Plus: All-time middleweight ratings, Larry Holmes, Louie Lomeli, McGirt-Warren II, Haugen-Pazienza II.

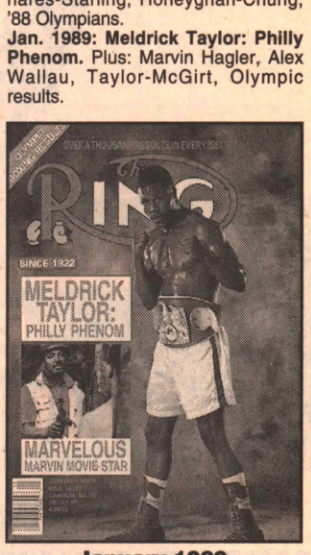
Aug. 1988: Julio Cesar Chavez: The Kid From Culiacan. Plus: Holyfield, bad decisions, Lockridge-Knight, Starling-Breland II, Brown-Trice, Haugen-Santana.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.



January 1989

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

March 1990: The '80s-Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian

fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, Excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler-Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Oct. 1990: Thanks For The Memories: Rocky Graziano, 1922-1990. Plus: Aaron Pryor, Mike Tyson, Napoles-Leonard, A Gathering Of Champions (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman: Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Marciano-LaStarza, boxing's best chins, Azumah Nelson, Sullivan-Kilrain (color).

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Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV: Now You'll Pay. Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison, Humberto Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis, heavyweight *Ring* covers (color).

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez-The Ring Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Mike Tyson, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, computer bantamweight tournament.

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be...But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again-How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson's Fight For Greatness: Will November 8 Be His Moment? Plus: Edwin Rosario, Jeff Fenech-Azumah Nelson, overrated and underrated, Giardello-Graham, Lennox Lewis, Marcel Cerdan, Muhammad Ali (color).

Dec. 1991: Evander Holyfield vs. Mike Tyson: Who Will Win And Why. Plus: Eddie Aliano, Jack Britton, Muhammad Ali, Pernell Whitaker, rating the 44 world champions, Marcel Cerdan, Henry Cooper, Ezzard Charles-Jersey Joe Walcott (color).

Jan. 1992: Our Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Jerry Quarry, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smith, Joey Gamache, moving up in weight, Billy Conn-Michael Spinks, Joe Louis (color).

Feb. 1992: 70th Anniversary Collector's Edition: Through The Decades With "The Bible Of Boxing." Plus: Nat Fleischer, Jeff Harding, Whitaker-Paez, Tatsuyoshi-Richardson.

March 1992: Turning Heads-Ray Mercer Makes His Statement To The Heavyweights. Plus: Lou Nova, 1980 Olympic team, boxing cards, Rodrigo Valdes, *Ring's* New Year's wish, Joe Louis-Muhammad Ali, Jack Dempsey (color).

April 1992: Is Evander Holyfield Tough Enough To Stay On Top? Plus: Buddy McGirt, George Foreman, Toney-McCallum, referees, Marvin Hart, Al Hostak, Eusebio Pedroza-Salvador Sanchez, Ketchel-Johnson (color).

May 1992: Fighter Of The Year: James Toney. Plus: Roy Jones, Rocky Graziano, longest title reigns, Myung Woo Yuh & Khaosai Galaxy, James Warring, Billy Soose, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

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Dec. 1992: Foreman vs. Morrison: Should This Fight Happen ... Will You Watch It? Plus: Ruddock-Lewis preview, Julian Jackson, Al Cole, Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey Museum, Randolph Turpin, Olympic recap, Floyd Patterson (color).

Jan. 1993: Slammin' 'n' Jammin'—Bowe & Holyfield Go One On One. Plus: The State of the Game, Gene Fullmer, Chavez-Camacho, Sullivan & Fitzsimmons, Bigfoot Martin, Carmen Basilio (color).

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

March 1993: From Question Man To Answer Man: Riddick Bowe Leaves No Doubts. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Lopez-Gamache, Frank Bruno, Rocky Kansas, Frank Fletcher, Crisanto Espana, Bowe-Lewis (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough Now? Plus: *The Ring* poll, Freddie Pendleton, Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Benny Leonard, Charley Burley, Lennox Lewis (color).

June 1993: Riddick Bowe: The Man, By LeRoy Nieman. Plus: All-Time Top 10: Ireland, Paul Hodkinson, Ray Mercer, Toney-Barkley, Kennedy McKinney, LeRoy Nieman (color).

July 1993: Pernell Whitaker Asks, "Who's Number One Now, Julio?" Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez, Richard Steele, The Brawl at the Great Wall, Michael Moorer, Chavez-Haugen (color).

Aug. 1993: A Ring Exclusive: Julio Cesar Chavez Speaks Out. Plus: Bobby Czyz, 10 hardest punchers, Rafael Ruelas, Carmen Basilio, closing of the Fifth Street Gym, Sugar Ray Leonard (color).

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Oct. 1993: Tommy Morrison: Good Enough To Beat Big George, But Will He Win The Heavyweight Title? Plus: Riddick Bowe, Mike Capriano, Billy Conn-Joe Louis, All-Time Top 10: Puerto Rico, Charles Murray.

Nov. 1993: Julio Cesar Chavez: He Crushed Haugen, Annihilated Alli, Is Whitaker Next? Plus: Marvin Hagler, Evander Holyfield, John-John Molina, training tricks, final show at Madison Square Garden.

Dec. 1993: What If Mike Tyson Had Never Gone To Jail? Plus: Freddie Pendleton, Michael Moorer & Tommy Morrison, Willie Pep, Ed Dunkhorst, All-Time Top 10: Cuba, Tyson-Spinks (color).

Jan. 1994: Was Pernell Whitaker Robbed In San Antonio? Plus: Azumah Nelson, Willis Britt, State of the Game.

Feb. 1994: The British Are Coming! Does America Have Anything To Worry About? Plus: Felix Trinidad, Junior Jones, fight clubs (Part I), Toney-Hearns.

March 1994: Evander Holyfield's Formula For Success—Obsession + Guts = Fulfillment. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Michael Bentt, Kronk, boxing novels, All-Time Top 10: Wales, fight clubs (Part II).

April 1994: Michael Carbajal: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Brown-Norris, Kevin Kelley, Ceferino Garcia, Oscar De La Hoya, Tunney Hunsaker, Spinks-Foster.

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July 1994: "I Wanna Be Like Sugar Ray": Oscar De La Hoya Becomes A Prime-Time Player. Plus: Nigel Benn, Gianfranco Rosi, Sullivan-McCaffrey, Donald-Williams, 10 likely upsets, All-Time Top 10: England.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Sept. 1994 (92-Page Special): How Michael Moorer Defeated Evander Holyfield, By Teddy Atlas! Plus: Chavez-Randall II, Lennox Lewis, Mando Ramos, all-time greatest cards, What If ... Duran vs. Arguello, All-Time Top 10: Scotland.

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The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended September 8, 1994

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

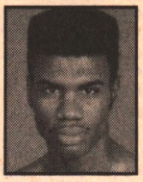
Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Leeonzer Barber

Julian Jackson



Terry Norris

Felix Trinidad

Gabriel Ruelas

Wayne McCullough

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **MICHAEL MOORER** — Detroit, MI *35-0 (WBA & IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** — England *25-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **RIDDICK BOWE** — Fort Washington, MD *34-1*
4. **OLIVER McCALL** — Chicago, IL *24-5*
5. **RAZOR RUDDOCK** — Ft. Lauderdale, FL *29-4-1*
6. **HERBIE HIDE** — England *26-0*
7. **LARRY HOLMES** — Easton, PA *61-4*
8. **LARRY DONALD** — Cincinnati, OH *17-0*
9. **LIONEL BUTLER** — Houston, TX *22-10-1*
10. **HENRY AKINWANDE** — England *24-0-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 195 pounds

1. **ORLIN NORRIS** — Campo, CA *41-3 (WBA Champ)*
2. **AL COLE** — Spring Valley, NY *25-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **ANACLET WAMBA** — France *40-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **THOMAS HEARNS** — Detroit, MI *53-4-1*
5. **SERGEI KOBOZEV** — Brooklyn, NY *18-0*
6. **CARL THOMPSON** — England *16-3*
7. **DAVID IZEQWIRE** — Washington, D.C. *16-0*
8. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** — Lexington, KY *23-2-2*
9. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** — Las Vegas, NV *21-3-1*
10. **NORBERT EKASSI** — France *20-4-1*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **VIRGIL HILL** — Bismarck, ND *39-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **MIKE McCALLUM** — Brooklyn, NY *47-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **HENRY MASKE** — Germany *24-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **LEEONZER BARBER** — Detroit, MI *19-2*
5. **PRINCE CHARLES WILLIAMS** — Mansfield, OH *36-6-2*
6. **FABRICE TIOZZO** — France *29-12*
7. **EGERTON MARCUS** — Canada *14-0*
8. **FRANK TATE** — Houston, TX *35-4*
9. **JEFF HARDING** — Australia *23-2*
10. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** — Germany *24-0*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JAMES TONEY** — Ann Arbor, MI *44-0-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **NIGEL BENN** — England *36-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **CHRIS EUBANK** — England *40-0-2*
4. **FRANK LILES** — N. Hollywood, CA *26-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **MICHAEL NUNN** — Davenport, IA *43-2*
6. **VINNY PAZIENZA** — Cranston, RI *38-5*
7. **TONY THORNTON** — Glassboro, NJ *32-6-1*
8. **TIM LITTLES** — Flint, MI *23-1*
9. **RAY CLOSE** — N. Ireland *20-3-1*
10. **STEVE LITTLE** — Reading, PA *22-14-2*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** — Pensacola, FL *26-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **GERALD McCLELLAN** — Freeport, IL *31-2 (WBC Champ)*
3. **JOHN DAVID JACKSON** — Seattle, WA *31-0*
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON** — Houston, TX *35-4-1*
5. **BERNARD HOPKINS** — Philadelphia, PA *26-2*
6. **QUINCY TAYLOR** — Dallas, TX *23-3*
7. **LAMAR PARKS** — Greeneville, SC *27-1*
8. **JULIAN JACKSON** — Virgin Islands *49-3*
9. **THOMAS TATE** — Houston, TX *30-3*
10. **STEVE COLLINS** — Ireland *28-3*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Mission Valley, CA *38-4 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina *51-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **GIANFRANCO ROSI**
   Italy *57-3-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
   New York, NY *21-5*
5. **JULIO CESAR GREEN**
   Brooklyn, NY *17-1*
6. **SIMON BROWN**
   Mount Airy, MD *42-3*
7. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO *30-1*
8. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
   Spain *35-2*
9. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
   Houston, TX *16-0*
10. **PAUL VADEN**
    San Diego, CA *20-0*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *33-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *23-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *26-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **BUDDY McGIRT**
   Hauppauge, NY *64-3-1*
5. **YORI BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *56-0*
6. **CRISANTO ESPANA**
   N. Ireland *30-1*
7. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico *18-0-1*
8. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *31-0*
9. **DERRELL COLEY**
   Capitol Heights, MD *25-0-1*
10. **MANNING GALLOWAY**
    Columbus, OH *51-12-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **FRANKIE RANDALL**
   Warren, OH *49-3-1*
2. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *90-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **JAKE RODRIGUEZ**
   Brentwood, NY *26-2-2 (IBF Champ)*
4. **ZACK PADILLA**
   Azusa, CA *22-1-1*
5. **JUAN COGGI**
   Argentina *67-2-2 (WBA Champ)*
6. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *13-0*
7. **TONY LOPEZ**
   Sacramento, CA *45-4-1*
8. **CHARLES MURRAY**
   Rochester, NY *32-2*
9. **DAVID KAMAU**
   Los Angeles, CA *23-0*
10. **FREDDIE PENDLETON**
    Miami, FL *35-19-4*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *33-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **RAFAEL RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA *41-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **NAZAROV OLZUBEK**
   Japan *20-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JOEY GAMACHE**
   Lewiston, ME *35-1*
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Montebello, CA *14-0*
6. **MIGUEL JULIO**
   Colombia *25-1-1*
7. **LEAVANDER JOHNSON**
   Atlantic City, NJ *22-1-1*
8. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *12-0*
9. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *15-0*
10. **BILLY SCHWER**
    England *25-1*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX *28-0-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
   Puerto Rico *35-3 (IBF Champ)*
3. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA *30-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **AZUMAH NELSON**
   Ghana *36-3-2*
5. **CALVIN GROVE**
   Coatesville, PA *46-5*
6. **GABE RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA *38-2*
7. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *18-1*
8. **VICTOR HUGO PAZ**
   Argentina *47-1-1*
9. **ED HOPSON**
   St. Louis, MO *24-0*
10. **REGGIE TUUR**
    Whitestone, NY *35-3-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **KEVIN KELLEY**
   Flushing, NY *39-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **TOM JOHNSON**
   Detroit, MI *36-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **ELOY ROJAS**
   Venezuela *29-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **YUNG KYUN PARK**
   South Korea *27-2-1*
5. **STEVE ROBINSON**
   Wales *18-9-1*
6. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *31-2-2*
7. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico *30-5-1*
8. **MIGUEL ARROZAL**
   Portland, OR *39-1*
9. **FRANCISCO SEGURA**
   Coachella, CA *25-6-1*
10. **ORLANDO SOTO**
    Panama *23-1*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *24-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILFREDO VASQUEZ**
   Puerto Rico *40-6-3 (WBA Champ)*
3. **HECTOR ACERO-SANCHEZ**
   New York, NY *30-2-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JULIO GERVACIO**
   Puerto Rico *29-3-2*
5. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Las Vegas, NV *27-1-1*
6. **WELCOME NCITA**
   South Africa *33-2*
7. **TRACY PATTERSON**
   Highland, NY *50-3-1*
8. **JESUS SALUD**
   San Diego, CA *49-6*
9. **JUNIOR JONES**
   Brooklyn, NY *33-1*
10. **MAUI DIAZ**
    San Jose, CA *26-1*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **ORLANDO CANIZALES**
   Laredo, TX *37-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **YASUEI YAKUSHIJI**
   Japan *22-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **DAORUNG CHUWATANA**
   Thailand *52-4-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *25-1*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *13-0*
6. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan *11-1-1*
7. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *13-0*
8. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *32-0*
9. **AL KOTEY**
   England *18-1*
10. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE**
    Puerto Rico *16-1*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia *17-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **KATSUYA ONIZUKA**
   Japan *23-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **HIROSHI KAWASHIMA**
   Japan *15-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JULIO BORBOA**
   Mexico *23-5*
5. **KHAOYAI MAHASARAKAM**
   Thailand *48-4*
6. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM *27-0-1*
7. **SUNG KIL MOON**
   South Korea *20-2*
8. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
   Denmark *21-0*
9. **CECILIO ESPINO**
   Huntington Park, CA *28-3-1*
10. **KOTARO HAYASHI**
    Japan *12-3*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **YURI ARBACHAKOV**
   Japan *19-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **SAN SOW PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *19-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **PHICHIT SITHBANGPRACHAN**
   Thailand *18-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *20-1*
5. **DANNY ROMERO**
   Albuquerque, NM *19-0*
6. **DAVID GRIMAN**
   Venezuela *17-1*
7. **MIGUEL MARTINEZ**
   Mexico *27-7-1*
8. **JOSE LUIS ZEPEDA**
   Mexico *23-12-2*
9. **ISAIAS ZAMUDIO**
   Blythe, CA *36-5-1*
10. **ALBERTO JIMENEZ**
    Mexico *27-3-1*

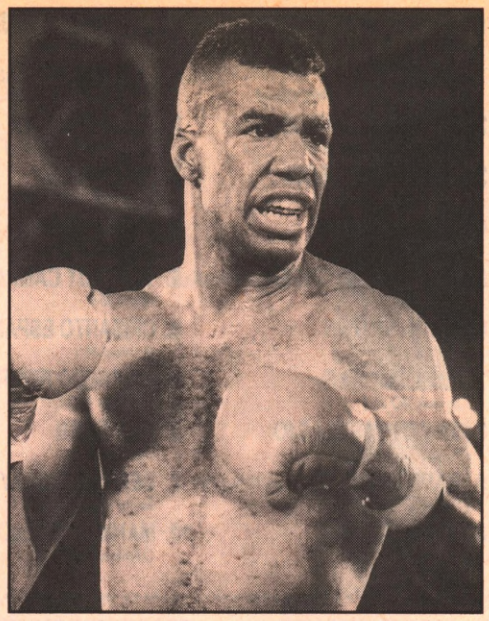
JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **CHIQUITA GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *40-2 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Phoenix, AZ *31-1*
3. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela *25-3-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *39-4-3*
5. **ERIC GRIFFIN**
   Jasper, TN *15-1*
6. **JESUS CHONG**
   Mexico *24-5*
7. **LEON SALAZAR**
   Panama *15-3-1*
8. **JOSE DeJESUS**
   Puerto Rico *26-2-1*
9. **FAHLAN SAKKIRIN**
   Thailand *26-2-1*
10. **ROBINSON CUESTA**
    Panama *23-1*

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Welterweight
2. **JAMES TONEY**
   Super Middleweight
3. **ORLANDO CANIZALES**
   Bantamweight
4. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
5. **CHIQUITA GONZALEZ**
   Junior Flyweight
6. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Junior Flyweight
7. **ROY JONES**
   Middleweight
8. **GERALD McCLELLAN**
   Middleweight
9. **FRANKIE RANDALL**
   Junior Welterweight
10. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
    Lightweight

New Faces



Paul Vaden

Junior Middleweight

By Steve Farhood

It was the penultimate round of an IBF Intercontinental junior middleweight title bout in Atlantic City, and Paul "The Ultimate" Vaden was seemingly in the midst of The Ultimate fold. After discouraging a strangely tentative Jason Papillion from the opening bell, Vaden was driven to the ropes by a cannonball right. Suddenly energized, Papillion began to release the punches he had presumably squirreled away over the previous 10 rounds. He punched frantically, but to no avail. Vaden brushed aside the scare, then reasserted himself and cruised to the finish. How was Papillion supposed to know that in the world of The Ultimate, boxing is entertainment, and entertainment must include at least a touch of drama?

"Sometimes," says Vaden, "I just need something to happen."

It's all part of showtime, or what Vaden calls his "Dazzle Tour Of '94." In his rematch with Greg Lonon, Vaden answered the first bell looking like a child who is forbidden to leave the table until he finishes his spinach. Lonon clocked him in round two, which, strategically speaking, was a major blunder. Vaden snapped out of his trance and finished Lonon in round four.

"That's when [trainer] Eddie Mustafa Muhammad comes in," says Vaden. "He's a motivational expert, and he awakens me when needed. When I'm thinking about the play *Cats* in the sixth round of a fight, he gets me out of it."

That a plain old boxing match can bore Vaden shouldn't come as a surprise. It's not that he views his opponents as inferior, but rather that a fight is only part of the package. Ask him for his Ultimate Fantasy, and Vaden issues the usual fighter's response—then takes it a giant step further.

"I think of myself as bigger than the show," says the well-spoken 26-year-old from San Diego. "The Ultimate dream is to perform in the ring and win the world title, then a couple of hours later, do a concert."

If he could only learn how to play the piano, maybe he could put his poetry to music.

Become amazed at the quickness I display in the ring
Become enraptured with each song that I sing
Sharing my time can be as vibrant as fresh roses
Keep staring at me and you'll see spine-tingling poses
Plead your wantings, I am the essence of surprise
Appreciate my unwavering heart and patient eyes
I guarantee I'll take you to the zenith of romance
All I need is a chance!

(Continued on page 70)

PRO RECORD

1991		
April 5	Quirino Garcia, Albuquerque, NM	W 4
June 10	Venusiano Paredes, Tijuana, Mexico	W 4
July 5	Jesus Lopez, San Diego, CA	KO 1
July 22	Rigoberto Garcia, Tijuana	W 4
Aug. 29	Armando Higuera, San Diego	KO 1
Oct. 7	Wilhelmus Krijnen, Inglewood, CA	W 6
Nov. 11	Eriberto Valdez, Tijuana	KO 3
1992		
Feb. 22	Richard Evans, San Diego	W 6
March 25	James Rivas, San Diego	W 6
April 29	Fred Thomas, San Diego	KO 8
May 27	John Armijo, San Diego	W 8
Aug. 27	Malcolm Shaw, San Diego	KO 6
Nov. 11	Sergio Medina, San Diego	KO 3
1993		
Feb. 24	Brian Isbell, Las Vegas, NV	KO 3
May 6	Greg Lonon, Las Vegas	W 6
July 23	Mohamed Moka, Lansing, MI	KO 5
Oct. 5	Greg Lonon, Las Vegas	KO 4
Dec. 18	Randy Smith, Las Vegas	W 6
1994		
March 25	John Montes, Las Vegas	W 12
June 30	Jason Papillion, Atlantic City, NJ	W 12

RECORD:	FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KO
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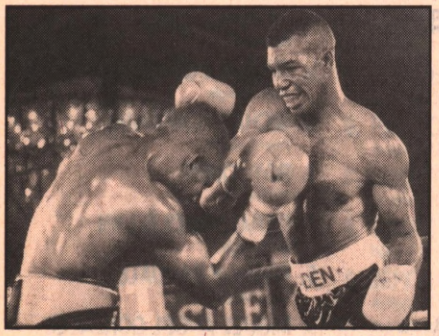

Photos by Jason Ross Lavin

Vaden shows his muscle vs. Jason Papillion

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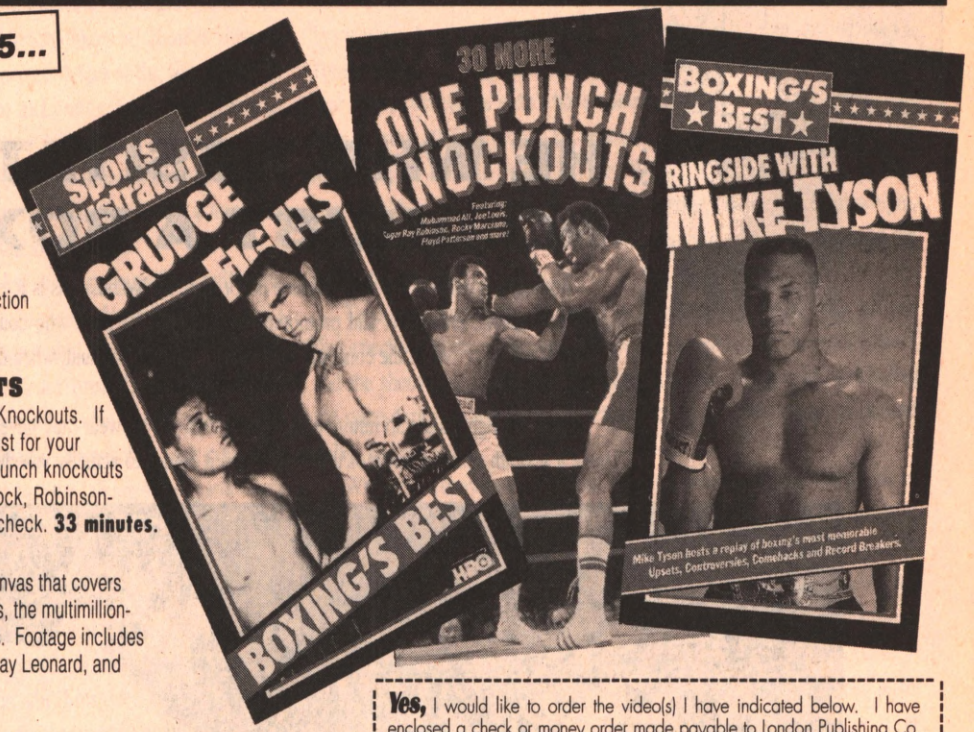

GRUDGE FIGHTS

The greatest grudge fights in boxing history are presented in this non-stop action video. See Jack Dempsey try to regain the title from Gene Tunney and Joe Louis seek revenge against Max Schmeling. Watch Joe Walcott battle Ezzard Charles and Rocky Marciano in epic wars, the Ali Frazier trilogy, plus a collection of rare footage that recounts boxing's most memorable bouts. **58 minutes.**

MORE ONE-PUNCH KNOCKOUTS

The exciting followup to Great One-Punch Knockouts. If you like knockout action, this video is a must for your collection. You'll see these fantastic one-punch knockouts and many more: Ali-Liston II, Louis-Braddock, Robinson-Fullmer, Patterson-Johansson II, Louis-Paycheck. **33 minutes.**

RINGSIDE WITH MIKE TYSON

Mike Tyson puts it all together in a colorful canvas that covers the main events, the controversies, the upsets, the multimillion-dollar gates, the records, and the comebacks. Footage includes Sonny Liston, Jake LaMotta, Ray Robinson, Ray Leonard, and much more. **44 minutes.**

THE MIDDLEWEIGHTS

The most skillful and devastating middleweights in the history of boxing are profiled in this fast-moving video. Watch stellar performances by Stanley Ketchel, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Marcel Cerdan. Also includes Rocky Graziano, Jake LaMotta, Carlos Monzon, and many others. Hosted by Curt Gowdy and Floyd Patterson. **58 minutes.**

BOXING'S GREATEST CHAMPIONS

Match wits with the Boxing Writers of America as they choose the best fighter of all-time from each division and then debate who deserves the title of the Greatest Fighter of All-Time. Includes explosive fight footage of Henry Armstrong, Benny Leonard, and Roberto Duran in the lightweight division; welterweights Barney Ross, Henry Armstrong, and Ray Robinson; middleweights Mickey Walker, Carlos Monzon, and Ray Robinson; light heavyweights Bob Fitzsimmons, Billy Conn, and Archie Moore; heavyweights Muhammad Ali, Rocky Marciano, and Joe Louis. **60 minutes.**

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS: "THE BIG PUNCHERS"

The biggest draw in sports today is the heavyweight knockout artist. This hard-hitting video explores boxing's most famous punchers. A sample of the action included in this video are clips of Dempsey's savage victory over Willard, the second Louis-Schmeling fight, Marciano vs. Walcott, and Frazier vs. Ali. **59 minutes.**

GREAT ONE-PUNCH KNOCKOUTS

You've got a ringside seat for a heart-stopping lineup of boxing's most exciting knockouts, including Muhammad Ali-George Foreman, Ezzard Charles-Joe Walcott, Jim Corbett-Bob Fitzsimmons, Rocky Marciano-Joe Walcott, Sugar Ray Robinson-Rocky Graziano, and many more. **30 minutes.**

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS: THE STYLISTS

Host Curt Gowdy highlights the careers of the sport's finest boxers. Beginning with Jim Corbett, you'll see challengers throughout history battle in some of the most striking film coverage ever assembled. Jack Johnson displays exquisite defensive skills, Floyd Patterson shows off his peek-a-boo style, Gene Tunney demonstrates the scientific approach to boxing, and Muhammad Ali exhibits the skills that made him "The Greatest," plus Walcott, Charles, and Louis. **57 minutes.**

TYSON AND THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

Join Mike Tyson as he takes a tour through the history of the heavyweight division. Tyson adds his own insight as he analyzes the styles and lives of the men who wore the heavyweight crown before him. This fantastic video includes rare footage of Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, Muhammad Ali, and, of course, Tyson himself. **51 minutes.**

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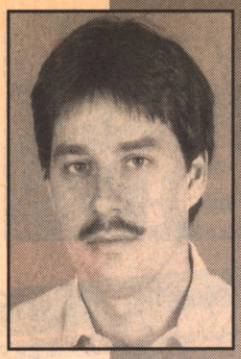


Ryan Out Loud

By Jeff Ryan

HE WHO HESITATES IS ... NO DOUBT A BOXER

Boxing is proof positive that patience is *not* a virtue. No business is less virtuous, yet so chock full of patient people. Fighters, managers, and promoters are the kinds of guys who could wait in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles or one of the concession stands at Woodstock II and, when they reach the counter after two hours, think, *What? So soon?*

At times, fighters are so intuitive in the ring that you'd swear they have a sixth sense. Too bad none of them have a seventh sense: a sense of urgency. When it comes to actually scheduling the dozens of big fights that are

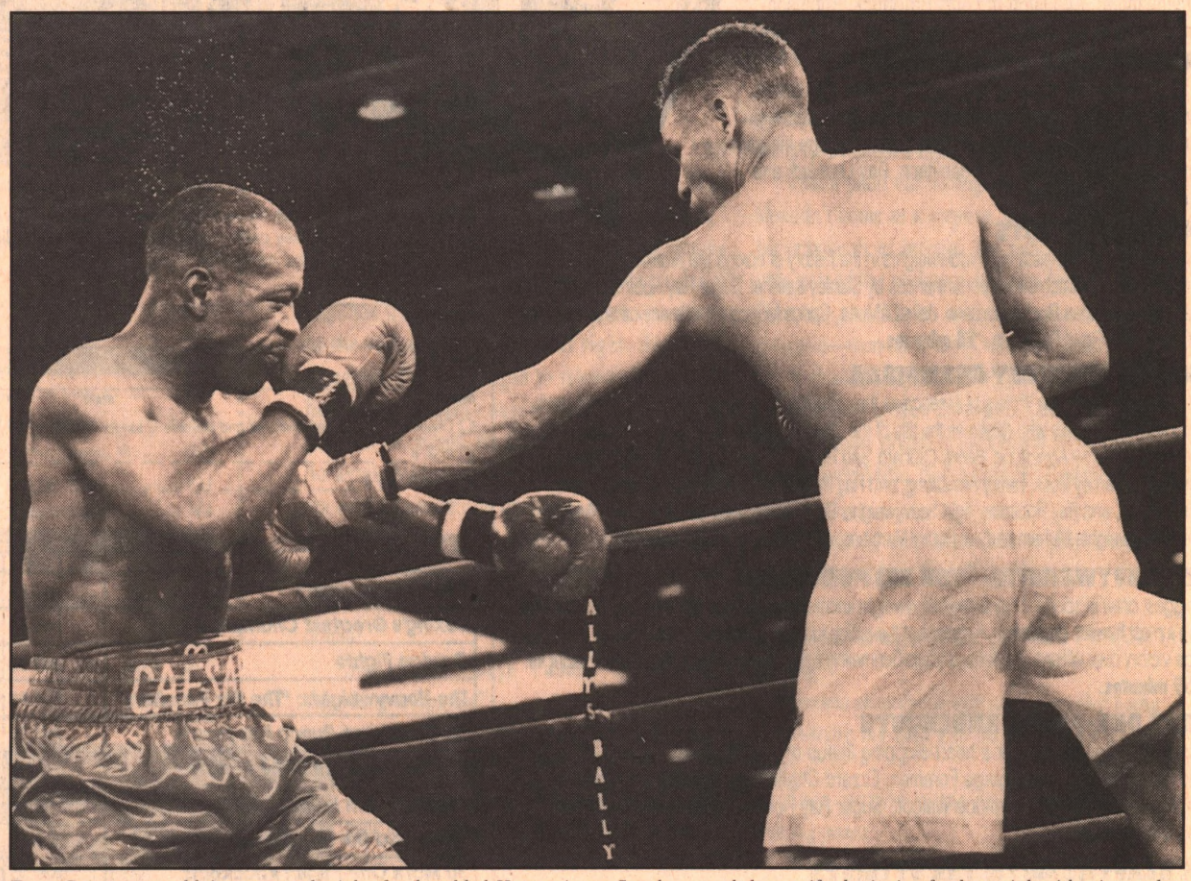


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Tracy Patterson couldn't get past the jab of unheralded Hector Acero-Sanchez, much less unify the junior featherweight title. A matchup between Patterson and Kennedy McKinney is dead and gone. This is a case where there should've been a sense of urgency to make the fight.

forever being proposed, promised, and dreamed about, today's boxers and their brain trust drag their feet so much, it's a wonder they don't go through three pairs of shoes a week. Boxing doesn't have 17 weight classes, it has 17 *wait* classes. No, come to think of it, maybe it really only has one: no wait limit.

During the hot, steamy underdog days of August, two thought-to-be sacrificial lambs turned out to be wolves in sheep's clothing. First, South Africa's Vuyani Bungu upset IBF junior featherweight titlist Kennedy McKinney,

then New York's Hector Acero-Sanchez dethroned Tracy Patterson, the WBC's 122-pound king. Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw didn't break into regularly scheduled programming to report the news, but it sure opened eyes in boxing circles, where a McKinney-Patterson unification fight, which looked great on paper, was being proposed.

These days, quite a paper trail of proposed matchups litters the boxing landscape. An HBO clash between Orlando Canizales and Junior Jones was killed off by Jones' upset loss to John Michael Johnson. Thomas Hearns-Bobby Czyz was blitzed by Czyz' unexpected defeat at the fists of David Izeqwire. Tommy Morrison lost a shot at Lennox Lewis by falling to Michael Bentt. Lewis and Riddick Bowe stalled their superfight long enough for Bowe to be toppled by underdog Evander Holyfield. In each case, delaying the big fight in order to pocket a few bucks and a few wins against "easy" opponents proved to be a suicidal strategy.

There is a lesson to be learned here, but too many guys have pulled the dunce cap down over their eyes and can't see the blackboard. Fighters aren't interested in career-planning because that would force them to think for themselves, and some of them can't order breakfast without help. Meanwhile, managers have convinced themselves that lining up a string of pug opponents for their fighters is an ingenious approach to their craft. Is it any wonder big matchups often don't get past the talking stage, particularly when two champions are involved? Geez, it's easier to unify Germany than the junior featherweight title.

Boxing has become *The Waiting Game*, a Chuck Barris production that is becoming increasingly more difficult for the audience to sit through. Every show is the same: Three "pushover" opponents sit on one side of the wall while an alleged star (say a Jones or Morrison) fires questions at them from the other side, then chooses a pushover to spend some non-quality time with.

Alleged star: Pushover number one, give me one good reason why I should put your name in my datebook.

Pushover number one: Because if you make a date with me, you won't have to make one with anybody who is more talented and dangerous.

Alleged star: Pushover number two, what qualities of yours would I find most appealing?

Pushover number two: I have no chin and a bad right hand.

There are two reasons why fight camps like to play *The Waiting Game*. In some cases (Morrison's, for instance), when a manager is operating with a degree, or perhaps a whole thermostat full, of trepidation, those big marquee matchups are viewed as 90 percent risk and 10 percent opportunity. As the fighter sits ready to blast off on the launch pad, his manager can think only of the space shuttle exploding, not man reaching the moon. In other cases (Bowe, Jones), handlers are so sure their fighter is the real thing, they believe nothing could possibly go wrong while they're tuning up the engine and whetting the public's appetite for the big fight down the road.

The case of the recently rekindled Bowe-Lewis fight is an example of misguided thinking. You would assume both sides had acquired a little wisdom after blowing everything the first time around. (Even before Bowe lost to Holyfield, Lewis almost fell to Frank Bruno.) Bowe and Lewis should square off as soon as possible and pocket those multimillion-dollar purses, WBC title be damned. The winner, after all, would be IBF-WBA champion Michael Moorer's most attractive foe and the most talked-about heavy in the world.

Apparently, though, that's not enough enticement. The strategy of the two camps is to wait some more, take interim fights, and "build anticipation" for a 1995 showdown.

Anticipation? The closer we get to Mike Tyson's expected May '95 release date, the less we're all going to care if Bowe and Lewis fight, sing a duet, or co-host the Daytime Emmy Awards. Tyson-Henry Akinwande (or whoever the comeback victim is) is going to be viewed as the Fight of the Century.

If you want to cut through the hype, rap, and propaganda and find out which fighters are *really* the best, take a look at whose big fights consistently materialize, who wins *every* tuneup, and who shows a Tysonesque, Leonardish, or Ali-like willingness to take on anyone. James Toney-Roy Jones is the kind of pairing that would be delayed for another year if the two camps didn't have complete confidence in the abilities of their warriors. If Toney wasn't a legitimate star, maybe he would have lost his tuneup to a tough Prince Charles Williams. If Jones wasn't the real goods, he'd be content to pile up meaningless title defenses at middleweight, not climb a weight class to challenge the champion some consider to be the best in the entire sport.

Toney and Jones head the list of guys who will walk the walk without first checking to see if the street lamps are turned on, the weather is nice, and the shoes they're wearing are comfy. Find me anyone else—including the once-daring Julio Cesar Chavez—who doesn't dilly dally, duck, and delay. Bet you can't.

While the Toneys and Whitakers are busy putting exclamation points on their Hall of Fame speeches, and the Joneses and McGirts are attempting to edit such punctuation out of the copy, the other champions stand around, reading horoscopes, making promises, and talking about future fights that will probably never happen. For some of them, the time to make that move to the star level is *now*, before something can go wrong.

It's time to sink or swim, and yet there they are, trying to tread water while wearing lead waits around their necks. ■

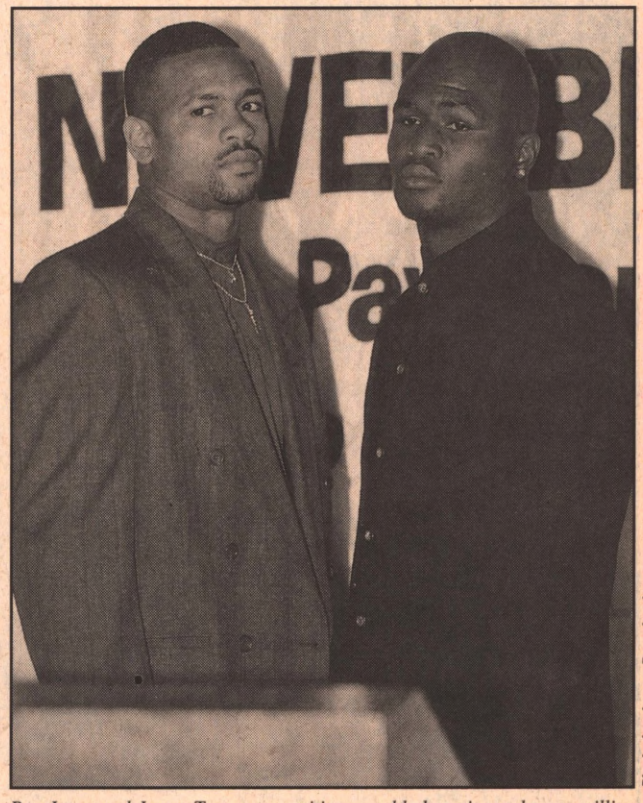
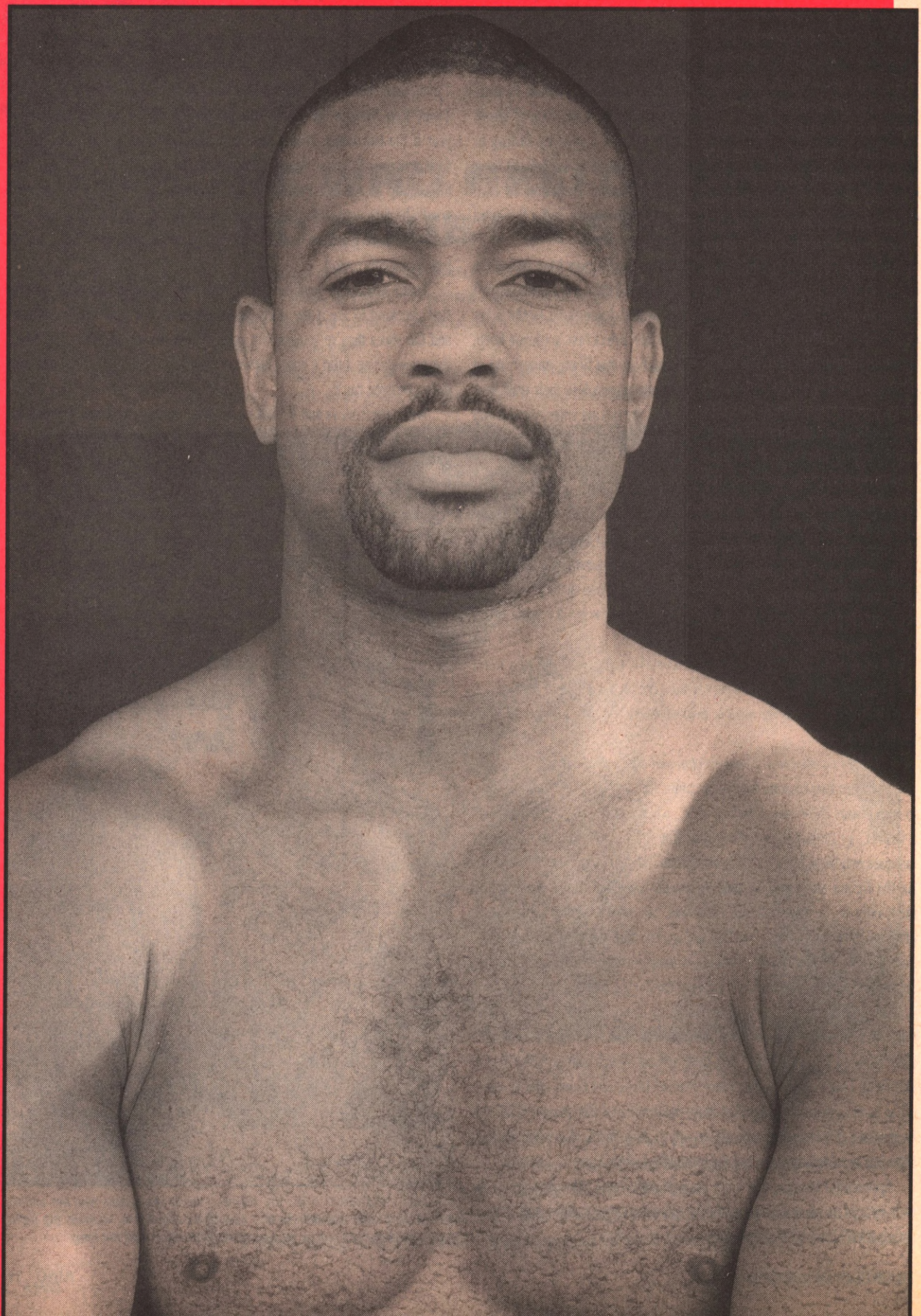


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Roy Jones and James Toney are rarities—world champions who are willing to risk their status against the best available competition. So many big fights fail to materialize because managers and promoters wait too long.

In 1994's Fight Of The Year . . .



ROY JONES HAS THE ATTITUDE TO BEAT JAMES TONEY

By Phil Berger

It was December 1992, and Roy Jones was on HBO. The opponent in what would be Jones' first appearance for the cable network was Percy Harris, a tall, well-schooled middleweight who figured to provide plenty of opposition. But that was on paper. In the ring it was another story. Jones went through Harris like General Sherman blitzing Atlanta. It was vintage Jones—all swoop and thunder, punches coming from every angle, leaving his fundamentally sound foe looking as though he were a sleepwalking novice.

That night Jones punched Harris with impunity, knocking him down four times—twice with right hands, twice with left hooks—before the referee mercifully called a halt in the fourth round.

The disparity in skill was shocking. So was the ease with which Jones worked. In the opening seconds of the bout, he let fly a punch that HBO announcer Jim Lampley characterized as "an almost casually thrown right hand."

Well, that looping blow put Harris on the seat of his trunks and set the tone of Jones' virtuoso performance.

Casually executed blows do not render grown men horizontal, right? But Jones' genius is such that not only does he make boxing intricacies look easy, he improvises rule-bending heretical moves, like the right jab-left hook combination with which he decked Harris for his third knockdown, just before the bell ending round two.

Jones is right-handed. Right-handers set up their big punches with left jabs. At least most right-handers do. But after Jones unloaded his unconventional right jab-left hook, HBO commentator Larry Merchant was moved to say, "When you have hands that fast, you can break all the rules."

By the end of three rounds, Merchant was intoning, "I don't think I've seen anyone with this kind of potential since the young Ray Leonard."

Merchant's telecast partner, Gil Clancy, agreed, saying, "Even the young Ray Leonard didn't have the kind of punching power this kid has. This kid seems to *exude* power ... with either hand."

So here we are, nearly two years later, and the kid with all the superlatives is about to fight the biggest match of his life, against IBF super middleweight champion James Toney on November 18 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The showdown, the best matchup of the year,

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

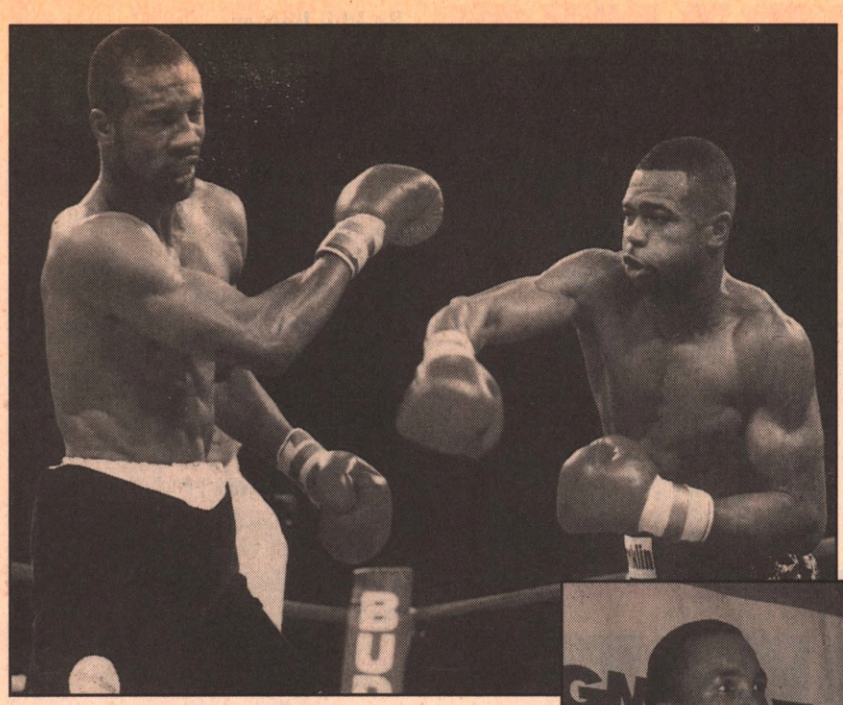
Jake LaMotta (far right) helped introduce Toney-Jones, which promoter Bob Arum hopes turns out to be the Hagler-Hearns of the '90s. Second from left is IBF President Bob Lee.

has been billed "The Uncivil War." Jones is still regarded as a fighter with great natural talent, talent that helped him win the IBF middleweight title. And yet ...

And yet there remain nagging doubts among boxing men. For every Jones adherent, there are half-a-dozen fight guys who will tell you Toney's the man—and natural ability be damned.

Listen:

Dennis Rappaport, promoter and former co-manager of Gerry Cooney: "Jones is a tremendous, tremendous talent and a better puncher than Toney. He may have better hand speed, but I pick Toney to win. I just think Toney is the cream of the crop. In Toney's mind, he believes he's the greatest in the world. And I gotta think Jones has



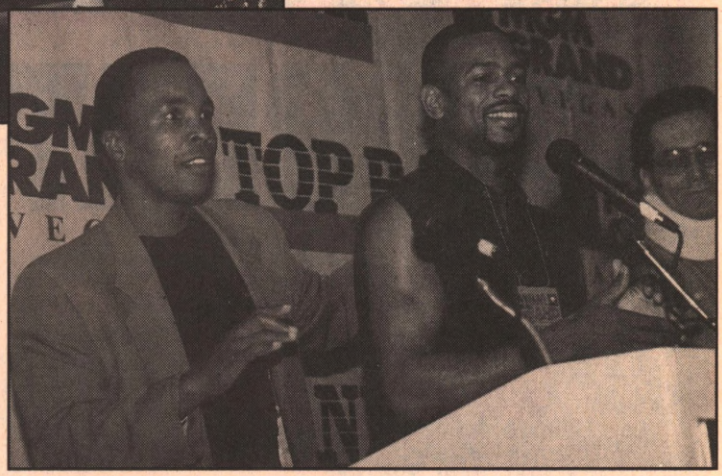


Photo by Tom Casino

Given Jones' speed and natural skills, which were evident during his annihilation of Percy Harris (above), he has been compared to Sugar Ray Leonard (right). Leonard will be ringside for Toney-Jones; he works for the MGM Grand, which is hosting the fight.

THE FIGHT OF THE YEAR: ROUND ONE

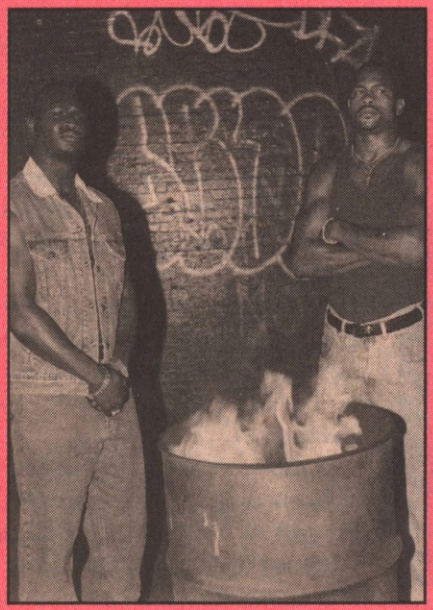


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Standing a frightening inches apart, James "Lights Out" Toney asked Roy Jones if he knew of any good restaurants in the area. Then the unbeaten IBF super middleweight champion stared directly into the unblinking eyes of his November 18 foe. Call it the beginning of the fight before the fight.

Jones, the undefeated IBF middleweight champion, clenched and unclenched his left hand. Just when it seemed the two champs were about to rumble, the director intervened: "Cut! Now let's do it again. And James, you can *smile* at the end of your line."

"I *was* smiling," said Toney without a smile.

Toney and Jones were standing on cobblestoned 10th Avenue and 13th Street in lower Manhattan's gritty meat-packing district at 10 p.m., filming a commercial for "The Uncivil War" at the MGM Grand. It was all part of TVKO's hype for the most anticipated fight of the year. The tension was real; outside of what was scripted, neither fighter said a word to one another.

"I'm *not* happy to be here," said an irritated Toney during a break. "F___ the smalltalk. I'm ready to fight. This is my dog pound. He's going to get bit real hard on November 18."

"Once I beat James Toney I will be, bar none, the best fighter in the world, pound-for-pound," said Jones. "He can't hurt me. I'm the dangerous guy out here."

Then the prop master gave Jones a crow bar for the next scene.

–Anthony Carter Paige

self-doubts. See, the quality of Toney's competition is much better. I mean, he used a guy the caliber of Prince Charles Williams as a tuneup for Jones. That's unheard of and tells you something about Toney's confidence.

"I saw Toney in Detroit one night. A young fighter walked up to him at a match there and told him, 'Some day I'd like to fight you for a title.' Well, Toney wanted to fight him right there on the spot. He has that meanness ... that combativeness. I think he's too much man for Jones. And I hate to put it in those terms. But Jones just has not been as active a fighter as Toney. And there is no substitute for activity."

Teddy Atlas, trainer of IBF-WBA heavyweight champion Michael Moorer: "I pick Toney. The other guy has tremendous ability—speed, he's a good puncher, he's just glowing with ability. But Toney is a solid pro. Steady. He doesn't falter. He has the temperament of a good fighter. And, of course, he's technically solid and smart.

"Jones has talent, but we don't know if he's matured into a pro yet. We don't know if he'll become discouraged and fall apart. Guys with talent sometimes fall apart. Roy Jones hasn't been tested. So we don't know.

"I can see Toney timing Jones. Like when Jones throws his left hook. It takes a seasoned and confident guy to do that. Most guys won't because they're afraid to get hit."

Gil Clancy, TV analyst and former manager and trainer: "I know Jones has tremendous natural ability, but the way James Toney is fighting now, I've got to pick him. He's solid. And very relaxed in the ring. In a tough fight, he always figures a way to win.

"What's missing with Jones? Discipline. He reminds me of Muhammad Ali. So much natural talent, he forgets the basics. You can't come in the way he does and leave yourself open. Sometimes you've got to set the other guy up. Jones goes for the home run ball all the time."

Well, it's nothing new for Jones to have his share of doubters. When he first turned pro, in May 1989, his debut against Ricky Randall, and next bout, against Stephan Johnson, were televised by NBC. The network sought to continue the relationship but found the fighter's manager-trainer, Roy Jones Sr., refused to approve the opponents the network sought.

So, for a while Jones disappeared from boxing radar screens. And when he did get mentioned, it tended to be negative press. It was said Jones Sr.'s preternatural caution had reduced a great fighter, his son, to bouts against one Mr. Softee after another.

Whatever.

In the summer of 1992, Jones severed his relationship with his father, a man who had begun training him in a cow-pasture ring when Little Roy, as he is still known, was a grade-schooler. It was a complex relationship, a struggle for psychological dominance, as the fighter saw it. And by '92, he had had enough of it.

As his own manager, and bankrolled by a pair of Pensacola attorneys, brothers Stanley and Fred Levin, Jones soon signed with promoter Bob Arum and began stepping up the caliber of his opposition, knocking out Glen Thomas, Harris, and Glenn Wolfe before beating Bernard Hopkins by decision for the vacant IBF middleweight title in May 1993.

The Jones the public has caught these past two years has sometimes seemed overly cautious or only mildly interested in the opposition. Against Hopkins, he admits he fought conservatively, more determined to win the title than provide the sort of pyrotechnics he did against Harris and, in his last fight, against Thomas Tate

(Continued on page 70)

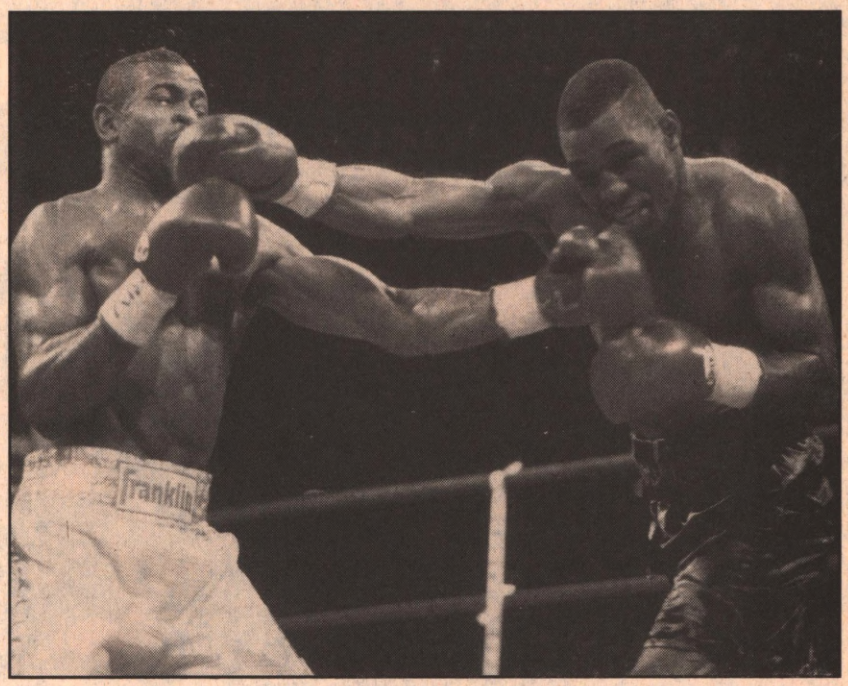


Photo by Will Hart/HBO

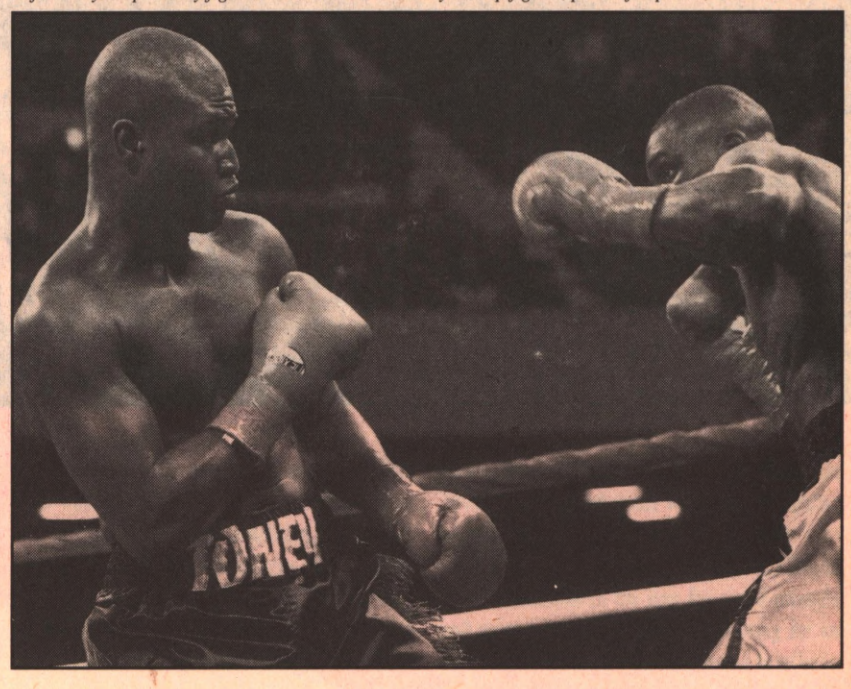


Photo by Brent Cook

Jones says "my instinct is not to stand there and get hit." In winning the vacant IBF middleweight title vs. Bernard Hopkins (above), he was rarely touched. Toney (defending against Tim Littles, below) is no less defensively adept. Many fight observers consider Toney the top fighter, pound-for-pound, in the world.

INJURIES IN BOXING

Part III: The Scariest Words In Boxing—Subdural Hematoma

In a photo that graphically illustrates the brutality of boxing, James Toney punishes Iran Barkley.

By Robert Cassidy

The two most frightening words in boxing are not Mike Tyson. In fact, that's not even close. There hasn't been a fighter in the history of the sport responsible for creating more fear and alarm than subdural hematoma. Whether a fighter actually believes it can happen to him—and most do not—it represents everyone's nightmare. It may exist as a thought or it may be tucked away in the subconscious. Nonetheless, it is there.

The subdural hematoma signifies the end. The end of a fight. The end of a career. And, in the worst scenarios, the end of a life. In most ring fatalities, the subdural hematoma has claimed responsibility.

The injury (a hematoma is a blood clot, and the *dura mater* is the fibrous membrane that covers the brain and spinal cord) occurs when the brain bleeds and swells and pushes against the skull. If the pressure is not relieved, the injured party can die of a hemorrhage.

No one watches a boxing match expecting to see a fighter die. Fighters do not enter the ring thinking they will kill their opponent, or that they may wind up dead. Death is not a byproduct of boxing the way a broken nose is. It is a rare and tragic occurrence. However, it remains a reality.

In the 1987 edition of *The Ring Record Book And Encyclopedia*, the volume listed 454 ring fatalities world-wide in amateur and pro boxing since 1918. Boxing historian Hank Kaplan said he has documentation of more than 1,000 ring fatalities dating back to the sport's barbaric period of the mid-19th century.

Based on the statistics presented in *The Ring Record Book And Encyclopedia*, ring fatalities occur on the average of 6.6 per year. In 1932 there was none, and in 1953 there were a record 22. During part of boxing's Golden Age, from 1946 to 1953, there were 119. Such a high number reflects the fact that there were a relatively high number of active fighters (amateur and pro) competing at a much greater frequency than today's participants. And the medical standards were relatively loose.

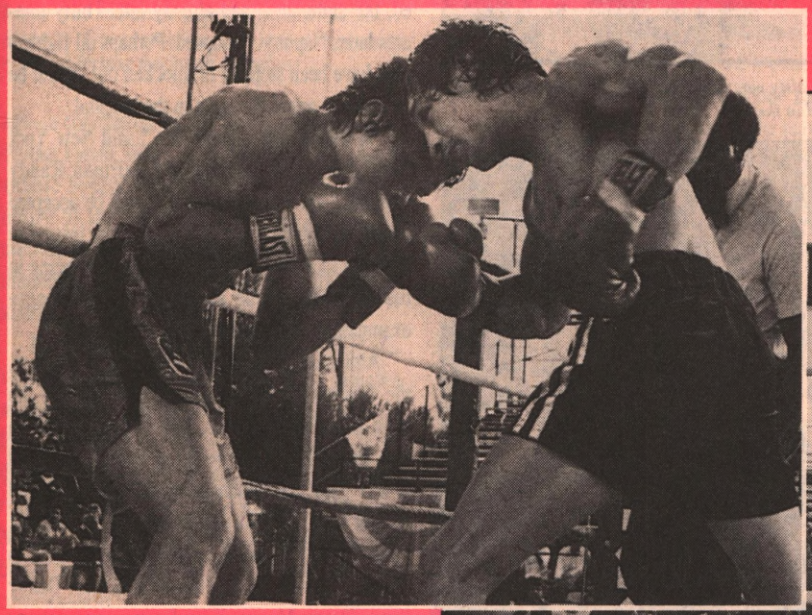
In 1994, there have been four ring fatalities—and four high-profile auto racing deaths. As THE RING went to press, NASCAR driver Ernie Irvan was in critical but stable condition, recovering from severe head and chest injuries after crashing into a wall at 176 miles per hour during a test run.

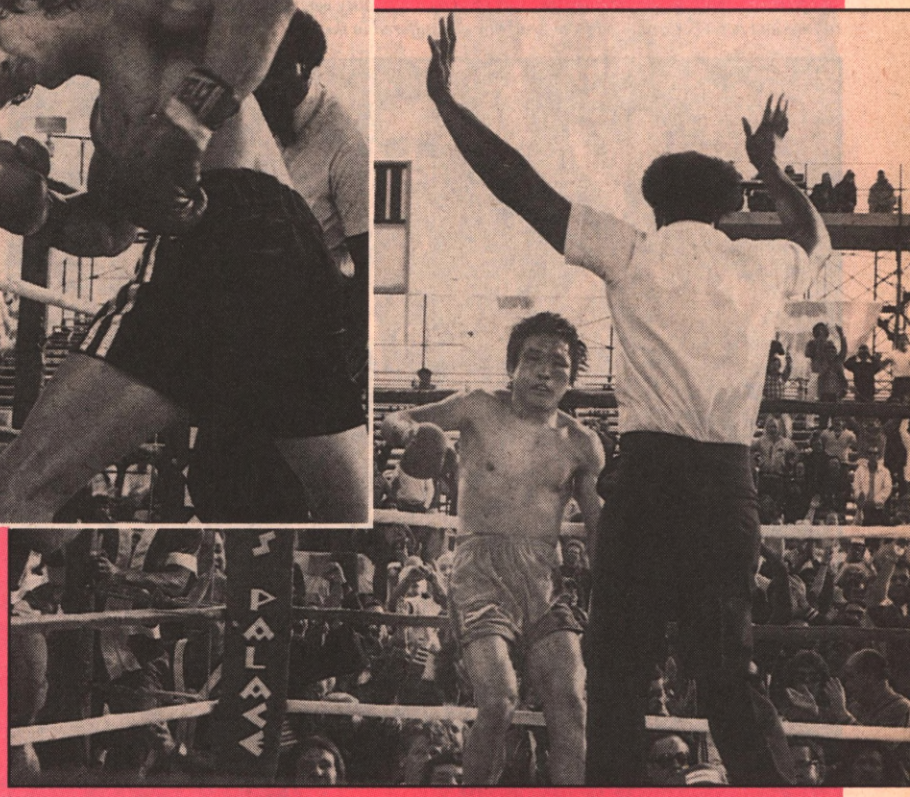
Still, each time a fighter dies in the ring, the most recent being welterweight Wangila Napunyi in July, there follows a cry to abolish boxing. And this comes when most people agree boxing is safer than ever.

Each year, the WBC, IBF, and numerous state athletic commissions research ring injuries and adopt new rules and standards to make the sport safer for its participants. Some innovations work and some don't. Regardless, all of the people THE RING interviewed for this series, including fighters, trainers, referees, doctors, and commissioners, unanimously agreed boxing is safer than it ever has been. But some things will never change, and head injury is one of them.

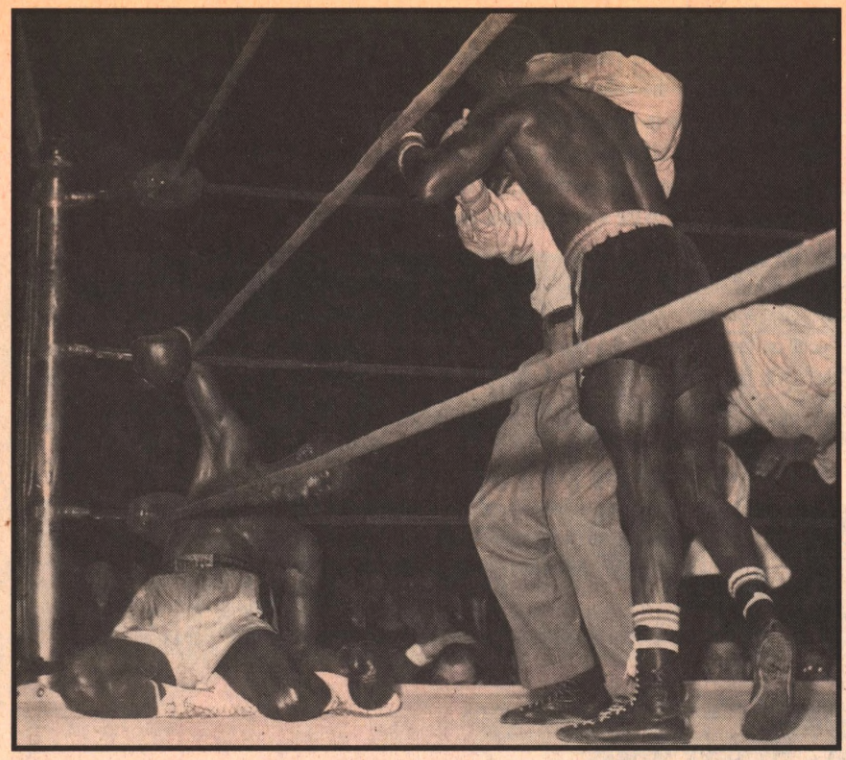
"Obviously, one guy gets punched and perhaps knocked out," said Dr. Gerald Finerman, director of the WBC-sponsored research facility called SPAR. "There's not a lot we can do to change that."

Change in boxing often follows tragedy. Middleweight Willie Classen died five days after getting knocked out at New York's Felt Forum in 1979. The cause of death was listed as cardiac arrest, complicated by brain-stem failure secondary to an acute subdural hematoma. Classen was unconscious in the ring for seven minutes and went into convulsions while waiting for an ambulance. Boxing was suspended briefly in





The Ray Mancini-Duk Koo Kim title fight of 1982 (above and right), which ended in tragedy, gave birth to the American Medical Association's campaign to ban boxing.



The first nationally televised title fight that produced a fatality was Emile Griffith-Benny Paret in 1962 (above and below). Paret died from head injuries suffered in the bout.

New York during an investigation. As a result of Classen's death, an ambulance and team of emergency medical technicians are required at all boxing shows in New York, as well as most other states.

In 1982, Duk Koo Kim died four days after WBA lightweight champion Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini knocked him out in the 14th round of their nationally televised title fight. The cause of death: a subdural hematoma. As an indirect result of Mancini-Kim, world title fights were reduced from 15 rounds to 12.

(No one has proved a healthy fighter is in greater danger in rounds 13 through 15. It has been suggested the real reason title fights were shortened was to accommodate network television, which can package a 12-round fight into an hour-long time slot easier than a 15-round fight. "I think it was knee-jerk reaction," said IBF President Bob Lee, whose organization was the last to reduce its title fights. "I don't know that it's made that big a difference in safety. But it has minimized a fighter's exposure to punches. We acquiesced because our champions weren't getting on TV, and that wasn't fair. Now that it has been accepted, it may not have been the worst thing to happen.")

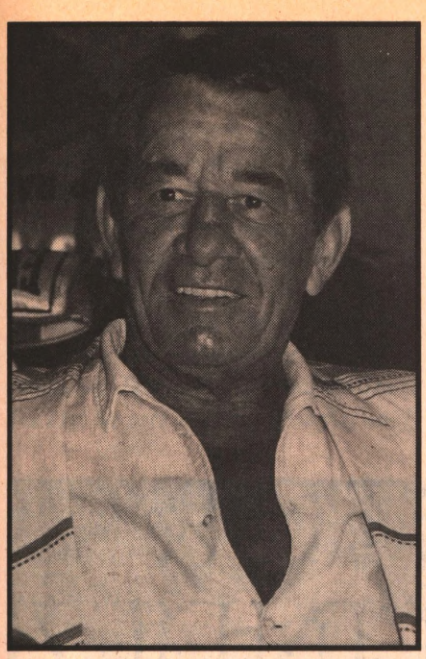
And what might the legacy of Napunyi be? The 1988 Olympic gold medalist suffered a ninth-round TKO vs. fringe contender David Gonzalez in Las Vegas. He was examined after the fight and did not appear to be in imminent danger. With the card having just been completed, the ambulance had already left. Thirty minutes later, Napunyi collapsed. Perhaps all fighters who have been stopped or knocked out should be required to spend the night in the hospital.

"It sounds like a good idea," said New York State Athletic Commission Chairman Randy Gordon. "But I don't know if it will be accepted or if it will work. First, it will send the insurance costs through the roof. And I'm not sure being in the hospital will be any different than being examined by a commission doctor."

Although many fighters have died in the ring, the fatalities in high-profile bouts receive the most attention. When an Alan Lonnie Goldstein dies after making his pro debut on a clubshow, it is wire copy that remains newsworthy for several days at most. A Goldstein soon fades into a tragic statistic. When death visits a championship match, however, the world takes notice. Benny Paret, Davey Moore, Kiko Bejines, and Johnny Owen died in world title fights. The Paret and Kim tragedies took place in nationally televised matches.

"The public outcry after the Paret fight was greater than any other fatality in history," said Kaplan. "That happened in front of a viewing public. It was one of the reasons boxing went off of TV."

The American Medical Association has been actively crusading to abolish boxing since Mancini-Kim. Its medical evidence that boxing poses a present and future health risk to its participants is often irrefutable, and the editorials in the AMA's *Journal* sting like a piercing jab: "The surest way to win a boxing match is by knockout, and knockout, by definition, is acute brain dam-



Fighters such as Rocky Graziano (pictured) and Sugar Ray Robinson suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Doctors have only recently begun research linking boxing to Alzheimer's.

age—a concussion. In all other sport, except full-contact karate, injury of the opponent is an undesirable byproduct of the activity. In boxing, injury of the opponent is deliberate and the method to win. We would argue that this is immoral and unique to boxing and full-contact karate."

But there are signs that boxing's prefight preventive measures and increased medical presence at ringside are paying off. In a three-month span from late-November 1979 to mid-January 1980, three boxers died due to injuries sustained in the ring: Classen, Tony Thomas, and Charles Newell. All three underwent surgery to remove blood clots from the brain. None ever regained consciousness.

During a four-month span in 1991, three fighters collapsed and underwent emergency brain surgery after losing world title fights. Kid Akeem, Fernie Morales, and Michael Watson all survived. And in 1993, Sergei Artemiev also survived a subdural hematoma after he was knocked out in a lightweight fight.

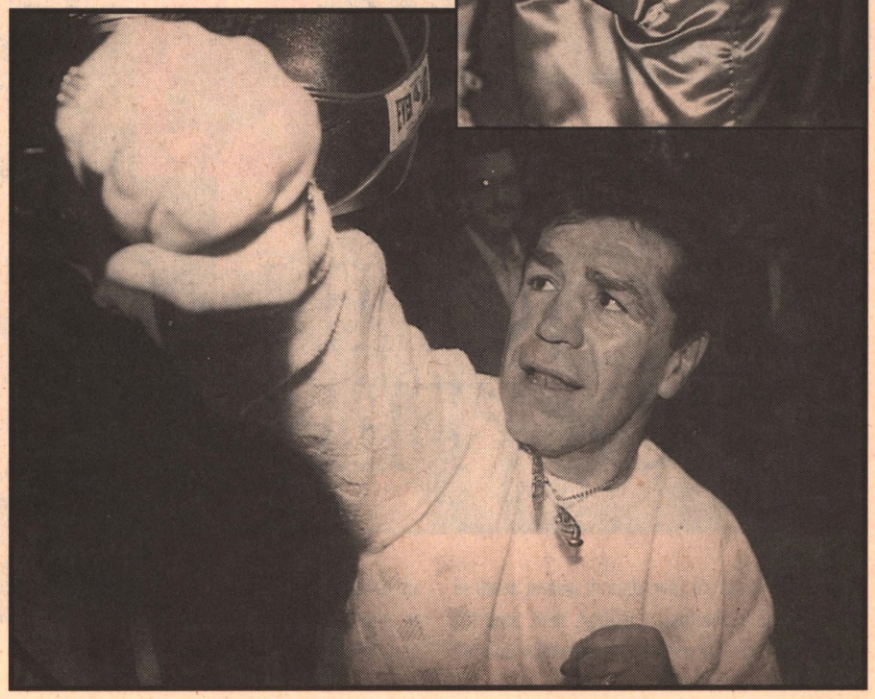
"The subdural hematoma is obviously a serious injury, and I don't know if there is any way to prevent it," said Gordon. "But in the Watson and Akeem fights, help was available right then and there. The quicker attention is gotten, the better chance they have to survive. I think it all has to do with quicker medical attention, better referees, better-conditioned athletes, and better physicals."

The value of prefight testing increases each time a fighter is denied a license, thus averting another potential serious crisis. Junior lightweight contender Harold Knight and 41-year-old former middleweight champion Vito Antuofermo are just a pair of fighters denied a license because of abnormalities in their prefight CATscans.

As a result of Akeem-Robert Quiroga, which was contested for the IBF junior bantamweight title, the IBF has banned the use of six-ounce gloves in lighter weight divisions. Fighters under 154 pounds use eight-ounce gloves; those above 154 use 10-ounce gloves.

Mandatory suspension after knockout or TKO losses, which also bars a fighter from sparring in the gym, is also an important protective measure because it allows the fighter proper time to heal. In fact, in New York, if a fighter loses six consecutive fights, or three straight by knockout, he is suspended indefinitely and subject to a review by the commission's medical board. The standards are far stricter than those of the NFL, especially when you consider Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman suffered a concussion—he didn't even remember his phone number—in a playoff game a week before he played in the Super Bowl. "Troy was never knocked out," said Cowboys' trainer Kevin O'Neill. "He lost his sense of equilibrium and had a temporary spell of amnesia. But concussions vary by degrees. Some are more serious than others."

While comebacking 42-year-old former triple-crown champion Alexis Arguello was issued a license to fight (right), 41-year-old former middleweight king Vito Antuofermo (below) was denied his return after taking a CATscan.



It's fair to equate Aikman's concussion with a fighter who has been stopped. Fighters who are knocked out usually don't lose consciousness. And even though Jets wide receiver Al Toon and

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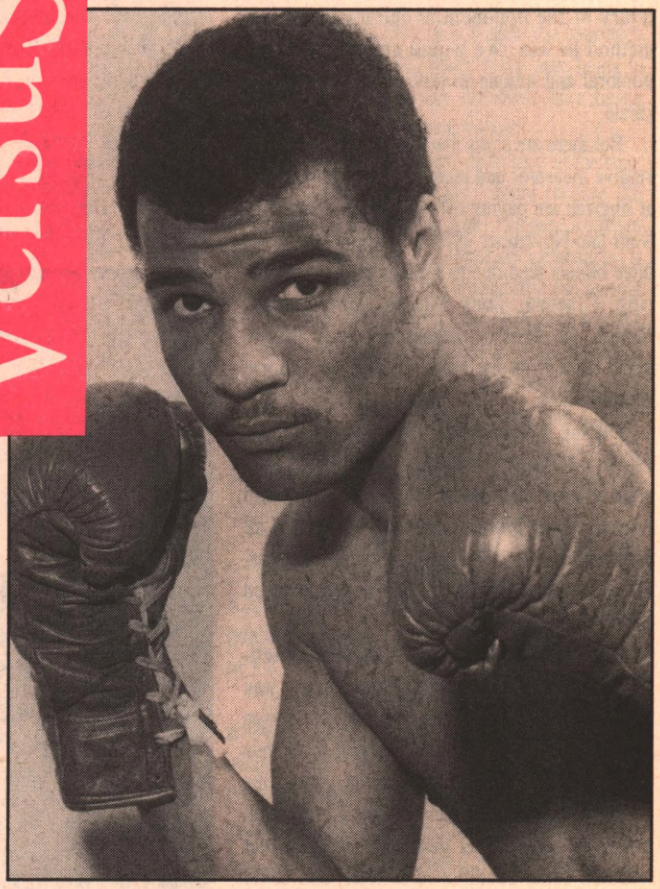
WHAT IF...

VICTOR GALINDEZ

VersuS



JOHN CONTEH

Most of boxing's best matchups are realized. But not all of them. For a variety of reasons, including timing, injuries, and promotional concerns, the fights we most want to see—the fights that could change history—sometimes fail to materialize. When that happens, we're left with our imaginations, which makes for never-ending conjecture and delightful debate.

With the help of Jim Trunzo, boxing's foremost computer programmer, and TKO Professional Boxing, by Lance Haffner Games, THE RING *has once again decided to play matchmaker. (In 1991, Trunzo helped us with "*THE RING *All-Time Computer Tournament.")*

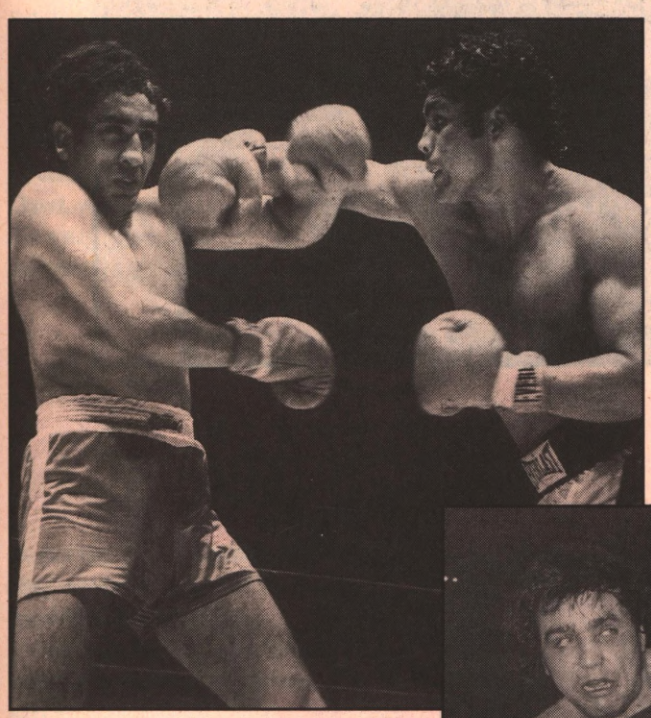
The computer program runs in compiled basic and consists of several thousand lines of code. More than two-dozen routines and subroutines cross-check such factors as ring position, the fighters' physical condition, accumulated damage, status of cuts, and special strategy, if any, that is used. In addition, almost 100 variables are constantly monitored during a given fight.

We've presented Trunzo with a handful of dream matchups, fights that could have taken place but never did. His program considers more than 100 variables, and he runs the matchups through his computer 20 times each. What if Jack Dempsey had fought Harry Wills? What if Roberto Duran had fought Alexis Arguello? What if Rocky Marciano had fought Floyd Patterson? Here are some of the answers.

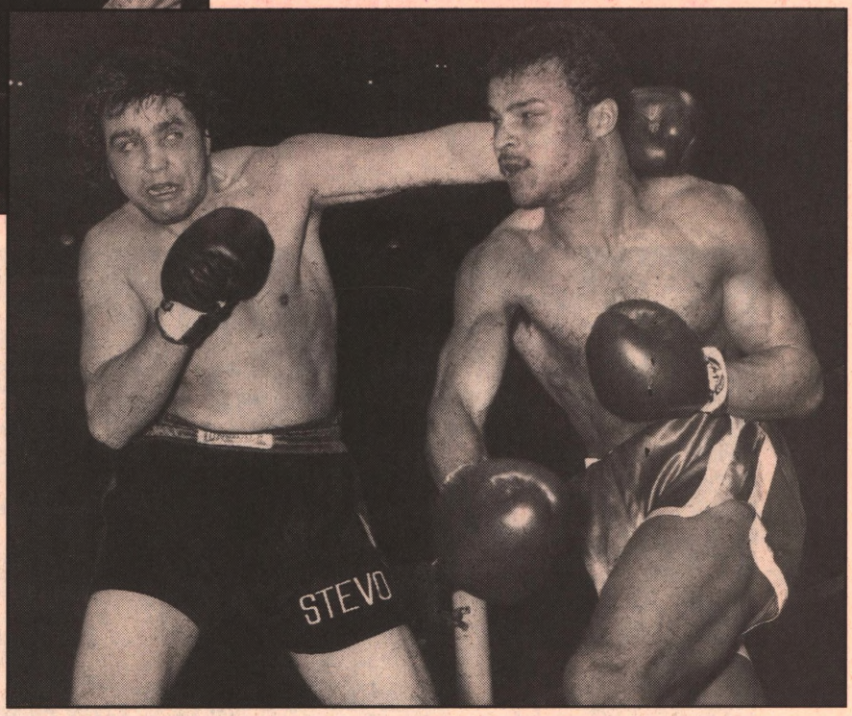
THE WAY IT WAS

There has always been a stigma attached to the light heavyweight division. Perhaps because of its seemingly manufactured origin—the division was created by Jack Root's manager in order to get his fighter a world title—the 175-pounders have historically placed a distant third in the race for boxing fans' affection, never quite achieving the status afforded the heavyweight and middleweight divisions.

Not that light heavyweights haven't occasionally captured fistiana's imagination. Certainly Hall of Famers like Paul Berlenbach, Billy Conn, Archie Moore, and Bob Foster added luster to the division. But even in those cases, their wins as 175-pounders were often overshadowed by their losses at heavyweight.



Galindez attacks during his points win over countryman and familiar foe Jorge Ahumada at Madison Square Garden (left). The bull-like Argentine was an aggressive counterpuncher. Conteh follows through against Les Stevens, whom he outpointed in London (below). The Englishman was a complete fighter who could box or punch.



That's why the '70s stands out as the 175-pounders' golden era. It was a 10-year span that saw the light heavyweights earn the grudging respect of the boxing world, a period when the rankings flaunted championship-caliber talent from top to bottom, with a dozen legitimate contenders awaiting a shot at the title. From Foster to Michael Spinks, with names like Dwight (Braxton) Qawi, Eddie (Gregory) Mustafa Muhammad, Matthew (Franklin) Saad Muhammad, Yaqui Lopez, Marvin Johnson, Miguel Cuello, and Mike Rossman in between, the division was loaded with intriguing fighters and choice matchups.

Two other fighters, as much as any and more than most, made the '70s a memorable time in the division's history: John Conteh and Victor Galindez. Conteh was an enigmatic boxer/puncher who emerged from the rough-and-tumble streets of Liverpool, England. He turned pro in 1971 and won 25 of his first 26 fights (19 by kayo), accessing the British, Commonwealth, and European light heavyweight titles on the way. He gained world recognition in 1974, when he decisioned tough Jorge Ahumada for the vacant WBC crown.

Fighting exclusively out of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Galindez started much slower, losing six of his first 22 pro fights. A mitigating factor in those losses, though, was the level of his competition. Juan Aguilar, Ahumada, and Avenamar Peralta, who issued Galindez all six of those loss-

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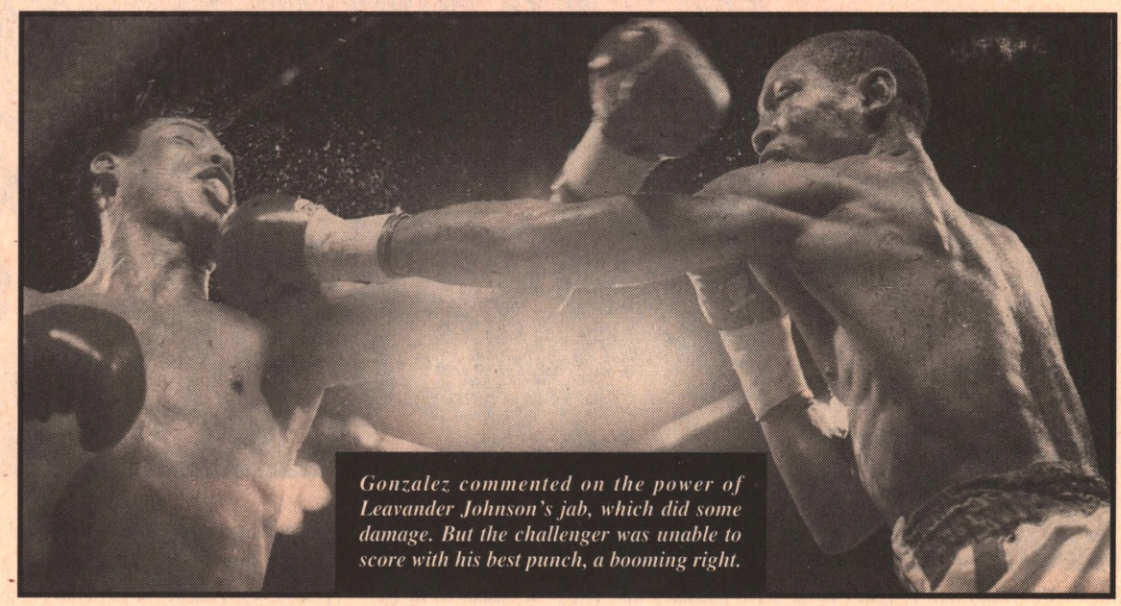
MEXICAN SUPERSTAR

MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ



Gonzalez commented on the power of Leavander Johnson's jab, which did some damage. But the challenger was unable to score with his best punch, a booming right.

Photos by Teddy Blackburn

Will Boxing's Best Lightweight Become Boxing's Best *Fighter*?

By Bruce Williams

It was 2:20 in the morning in Ciudad Juarez, and the postfight partying seemed on the verge of winding down. A long night, a lot of fights, and more than a few cervezas quaffed by the revelers. And then the hero walked in the door. Only a boxer? His was a reception worthy of movie stars and heads of state. Women blushed and sighed, and men smiled and applauded in a mixture of envy and admiration.

The star of the '90s is growing brighter every day. The heady days of the conquests of Cesar are fading. The new appreciation in Mexico and the rest of the world of boxing is for the canvas masterpieces of Michelangelo.

Miguel Angel Gonzalez took it all in stride. He's been an Olympic medalist, held minor titles in his formative years as a pro, and has reigned as WBC lightweight champion for two years and six defenses. And, like countryman Julio Cesar Chavez, who once held the same title, Gonzalez is at a stage where he seems to be getting better and better with each performance. The whispers are growing into firm convictions: Gonzalez is being recognized as one of the best fighters, pound-for-pound, in the sport.

Posing at the weigh-in with Johnson and promoter Rogelio Robles, Gonzalez was relaxed and confident, largely because he had easily made weight. This was the sixth defense for Gonzalez.

Leavander Johnson, the unbeaten number-one ranked contender from Atlantic City, was supposed to strongly test Gonzalez. Many disbelievers thought the champion would be exposed in the Plaza Monumental bull ring of Ciudad Juarez: questionable chin, lackadaisical conditioning, unimpressive power, inconsistent skills. Instead, Gonzalez did the exposing; Johnson wasn't ready for this kind of opposition. With the possible exception of strawweight Ricardo Lopez, there's not a complete package superior to Gonzalez today.

"It was a great show; Miguel fought like a real champion," gushed Rogelio Robles, whose Azteca Promotions won the purse bid to put on the Gonzalez-Johnson clash. "That Oscar De La Hoya wants to fight him, but he would stand little chance, as Miguel is improving each time."

Ricardo Maldonado Jr., Gonzalez' adviser, agreed, adding, "I don't think [De La Hoya] really wants to fight him. Miguel would beat him, whether it was at 135 or 140 [pounds]. Easy!"

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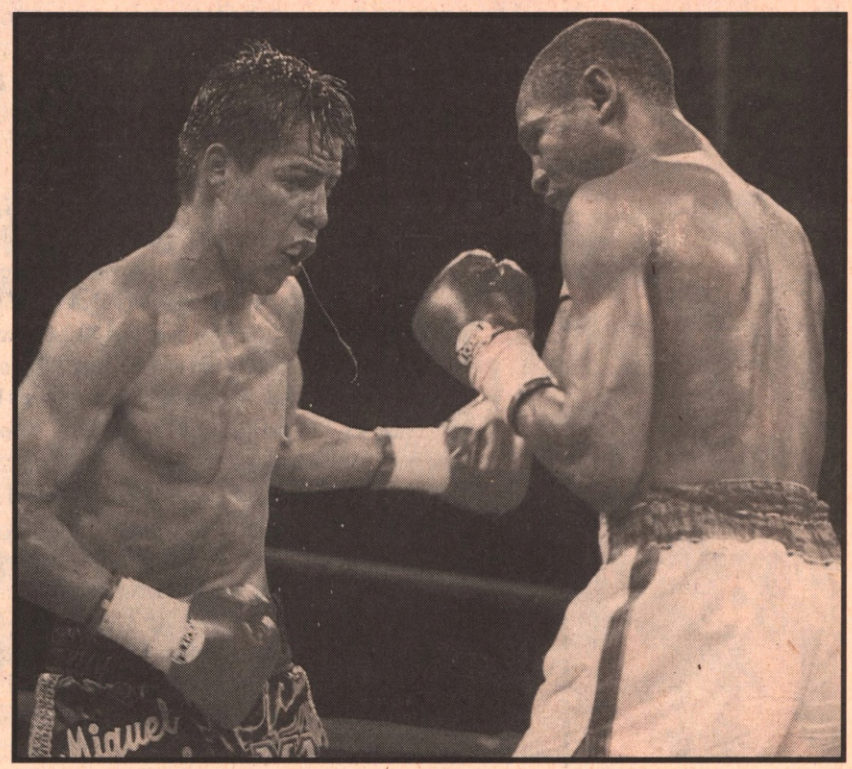

Gonzalez bled throughout, but remained in control by mixing his attack. Johnson, arguably his toughest title challenger, lasted until round eight, but by then, he could barely defend himself.

By Stanley Weston
Publisher, THE RING Magazine

Time CAPSULES

HEADS UP

(February 9, 1940)

We all have off-nights. Even supermen like Joe Louis. If ever there was an outing "The Brown Bomber" wanted to forget, it was that February night in 1940, when the temperature outside Madison Square Garden was a frigid 17 degrees, and under the right lights it registered a blistering 90. Joe could take the heat, but the embarrassment was something he had never before experienced. The world heavyweight champion was made to look like an inept amateur by a pock-faced Chilean who was built like a tank and, in the opinion of many, too dumb to be afraid of his executioner. Louis couldn't believe anybody could, and would, do the wild and crazy things that came naturally to Arturo Godoy.

This would be the ninth defense for the 25-year-old champion. And as had been the case in Joe's previous eight defenses, the betting odds were irrelevant. Nobody cared that the price at ring time settled at 7-1. It could have been 10-1, 30-1, or 50-1. What scarce betting there was revolved around how long the 27-year-old Senor Godoy would remain upright. What seemed like a reasonable wager: even money that he wouldn't be around to hear the bell for round three.

You have to wonder why at least some of the smart gamblers shrugged off Al Weill's prefight words of wisdom. Unquestionably one of the most astute managers of all-time, Weill, the manager of world champions Joey Archibald and Lou Ambers, had brought Godoy into his gilded stable and quickly maneuvered the heavyweight into a shot at Louis. Weill cautioned the world not to sell his South American tiger short. "My guy is a street brawler," bellowed Al to anyone who would listen. "He don't know nothing about fancy jabs and cutie stuff. I never seen a stronger heavyweight in my life. He's a real bull. And he don't scare. He don't know what fear means. I guarantee he ain't gonna die against Louis like all them other guys. And I guarantee Louis ain't ever been in there with a guy who can do the things my Arturo can—and is—gonna do to him."

We will never know if Weill believed his own words enough to risk a few of his own bucks. What we do know is that Al must have had a crystal ball because all his predictions were perfect.

The first proof of Weill's clairvoyance came during early-afternoon physical examinations and weigh-in ceremonies on fight day, when an astonished Dr. William Walker, the saintly Commission physician who claimed to have checked out more than 10,000 boxers in his 25 years on the job, measured Godoy's blood pressure and pulse rate and told the press, "This man isn't human. He hasn't the slightest nervous reaction, even under these very stressful circumstances. When I examined him at his camp last Tuesday, his pressure was 134, and today it's 130 over 80, which indicates unnatural calm. He's in perfect condition, as his pulse rate of 72 shows.

When Commission Chairman John J. Phelan stood between the two fighters while issuing official instructions, he directed his remarks directly at Godoy, at one point going so far as to wave his finger under the Senor's generous nose to further stress his points. "No hitting on the break. Remember. And no holding. Understand? And you, Mr. Godoy, when you're knocked down, get up at no later than the count of nine. Don't stay down until 10 or you'll lose the fight. Remember that."

Arturo didn't have to remember; he was the aggressor throughout. The closest he came to being knocked down was when he crouched so low that on three occasions his gloves actually touched the canvas. That confused even the most respected referee of the era, the unshakable Arthur Donovan, who hesitated in deciding whether to perform the prescribed ritual of wiping Godoy's gloves across his body to remove any resin. "You do that after a knockdown," Donovan explained during a postfight interview. "But Godoy wasn't knocked down, and I didn't want to indicate that he was. The only thing I could do was wipe

off his gloves and then signal the judges that there hadn't been a knockdown."

The fearless South American bull swarmed all over the bewildered champion, pinning him against the ropes like a hide drying in the sun, pumping every kind of blow known to man into Joe's body, always keeping the top of his rock-hard head under Louis' chin and using it like a piledriver. Godoy connected with 10 shots for every one he absorbed, yet, remarkably, the champion's face remained unmarked.

One disgruntled fan, sitting fifth row ringside, seemed to sum up the mood of the crowd when he arose at the end of round six and shouted, "Bring out the *real* Joe Louis. That guy is an impostor!" But the wise men knew better. Although they had never seen The Brown Bomber appear so pathetically slow afoot and disoriented since he had become champion in 1937, it was clear the real problem was that he lacked the most important thing of all, a clear plan of action against the most unorthodox opponent he had ever faced. The finger of blame pointed directly at Joe's lionized trainer, Jack "Chappie" Blackburn. But even in boxing, one does not cast aspersions at a saint. Only one journalist among the 150 covering the fight publicly hinted the unthinkable: Blackburn had been the real culprit.

Louis was always changing his mind in mid-stream. He'd start a punch, then pull it back. He was continually backing away from the dynamo crouching, then lunging, before him. He spent the night with his back against the ropes, head raised in hopes of avoiding the constant butting. The 7-1 underdog controlled the action, and Joe couldn't do a thing about it. Once, as Godoy charged, half-crouched, head lowered, the heavyweight champion backed all the way across the ring without attempting a single blow as Arturo mockingly invited annihilation.

Confident he was but a few scant minutes away from being crowned the new champion, Senor Godoy began celebrating as the bell sounded the start of round 14. He whirled around the ring as if performing a native Chilean folk dance, grinning wildly while making strange gestures at the bewildered Louis. After three whirls around the ring, an obviously annoyed Donovan ordered Arturo to "fight, fight, fight!" But the crowd seemed to be enjoying the insanity of the moment, perhaps expecting this out-of-space weirdo to ignite a tribal fire. Or start beating a tom-tom. Then, as the round drew to a close, the jubilant Godoy astonished everybody in sight by planting a smacking, wet kiss on Louis' cheek. Donovan shook his head in disgust, Louis didn't have a clue, and the crowd broke into thundering laughter.

"Why did you kiss him?" Godoy was asked. Actually, the fighter explained in a horribly fractured English, it was a matter of courtesy on the part of a visitor in a foreign land. "Louee hit me hard," he said. "But I no feel anything. Very happy for that, so I kees heem." Now anybody can understand that. Why, it makes all the sense in the world. Or does it?

Referee Donovan gave Louis 10 rounds, as did judge George Lecron. But judge Tommy Shortell, who must have been a lover of Chilean folk dancing, saw it 10 rounds for *Godoy*. As expected, Weill howled, "My Arturo was robbed. He wins all the way from New York City to South America. And back! We won at least 11 rounds. Wait till next time."

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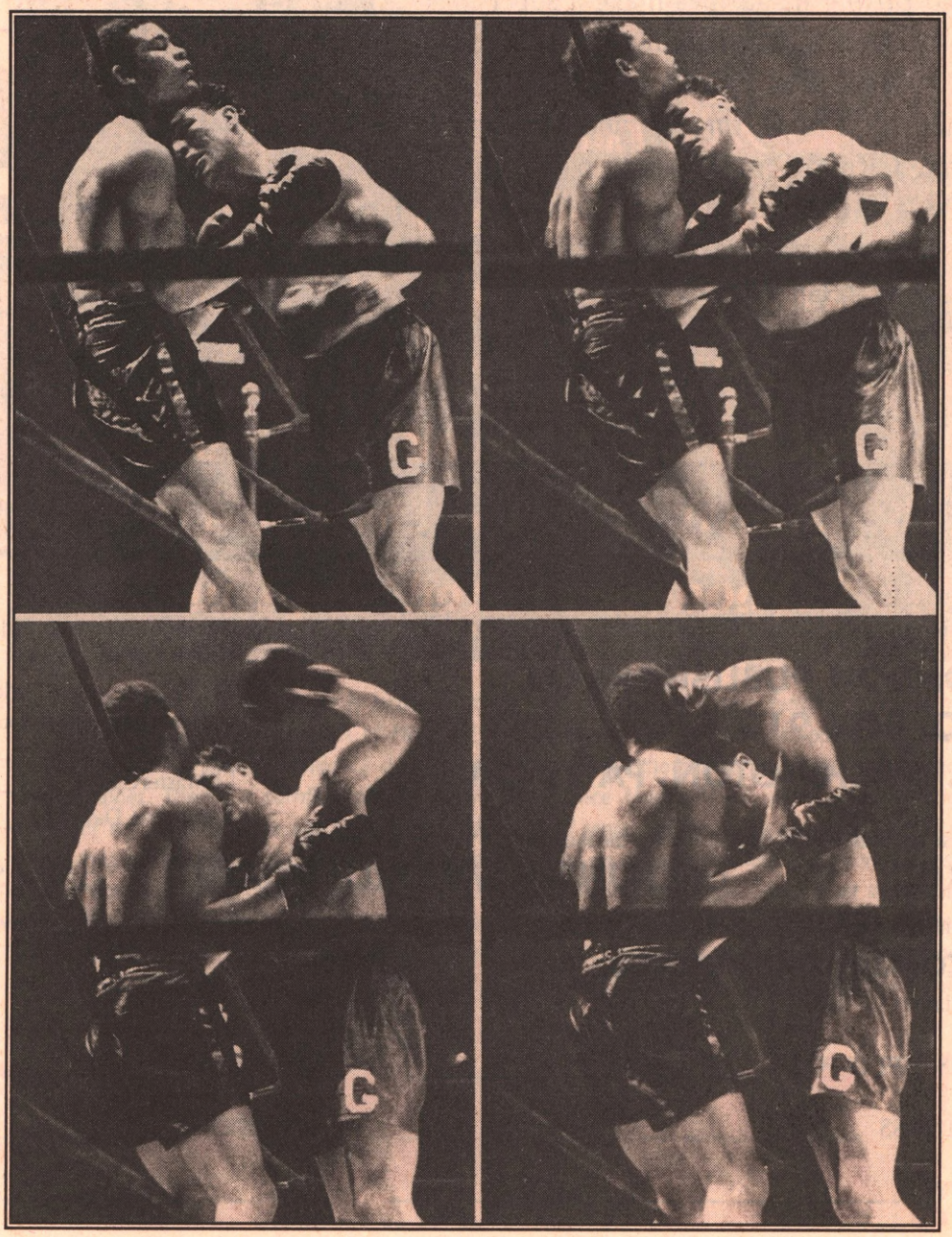
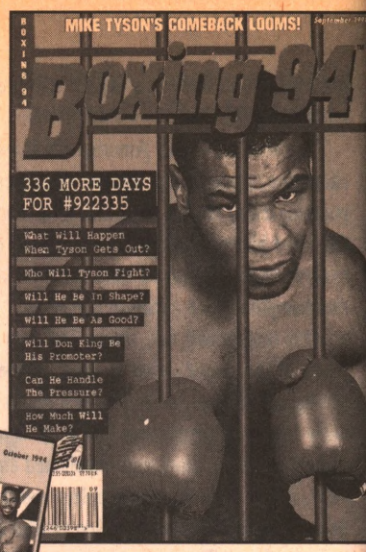
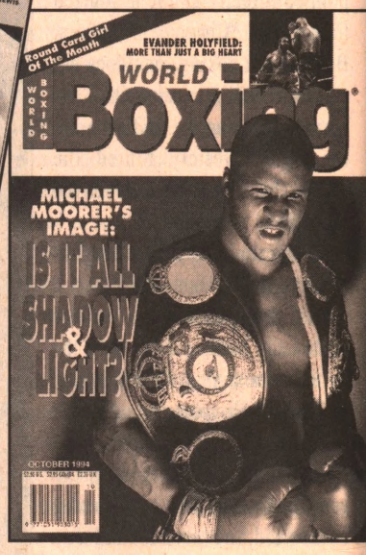


Confused, disoriented, and without a battle plan, Louis is pinned against the ropes by Godoy, who uses his head for a battering ram under the champion's chin, forcing Joe's head up and exposing the target for a booming overhand hook.

Make The Holidays A Knockout This Year!!





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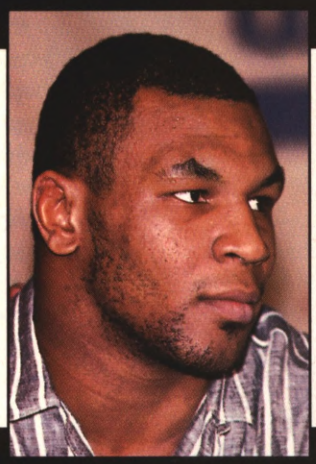
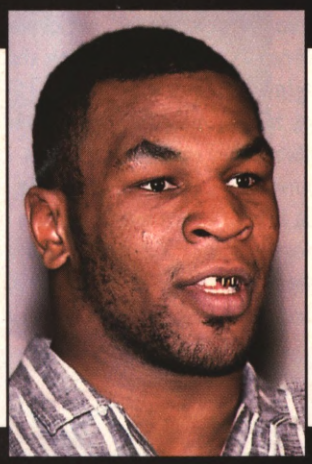
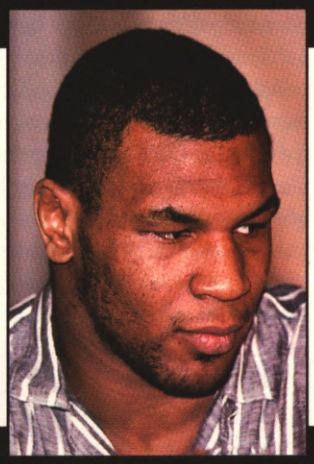
The RING Exclusive

MIKE TYSON SPEAKS!







"Now, Mike Tyson hates the world. That's just a fact. I hate everybody. I know they say, 'No, you can't hate the world, don't be bitter.' But I just hate everybody."

The Indiana Youth Center is located just off Route 40 in the town of Plainfield, about 25 miles outside of downtown Indianapolis. There's a cornfield on the other side of the road, and except for the barbed wire-topped fence and guard towers, it looks more like a rural high school than a penitentiary. The IYC also happens to be the residence of America's most famous prison inmate this side of O.J. Simpson.

Michael Gerald Tyson, former heavyweight champion of the world and self-proclaimed baddest man on the planet, has been incarcerated here since March 1993, when judge Patricia Gifford sentenced him to six years for the 1991 rape of an 18-year-old beauty pageant contestant. Under Indiana law, Tyson must serve half his time before becoming eligible for parole. Despite a series of appeals on his behalf by high-powered attorney Alan Dershowitz and

rumors of impending deals to spring him, inmate number 922335 remains behind bars. Excluding any unforeseen occurrences, his parole date is May 9, 1995.

Although he was no longer champion at the time of his conviction, Tyson, 41-1 (36), was still widely regarded the best heavyweight in the world. As far as the public was concerned, his 10th-round knockout loss to Buster Douglas in February 1990 was an aberration, more the result of Tyson's wavering commitment than a genuine erosion of skills. To millions of Tyson devotees around the world, it was just a matter of time before he regained the title he'd squandered. A scheduled bout with then-champion Evander Holyfield was scrapped when Tyson, awaiting trial, suffered a rib injury. It's a foregone conclusion, however, that upon his release, "Iron Mike" will have absolutely no problem obtaining a fight (fights) with any and all claimants to the throne.

The public's appetite for Tyson has increased, not diminished, since he's been locked up. Even though he hasn't fought since June 28, 1991, when he won a unanimous 12-round decision over Razor Ruddock, Tyson is still the most famous boxer in the world, with the potential to earn untold millions of dollars.

Yet despite his notoriety, and despite the fact both his ring career and personal life have been scrutinized ad nauseam, Tyson remains an enigma. Who is the real Mike Tyson? Is he a barbaric street thug who temporarily managed to channel his inner rage and anti-social attitude into a sensational boxing career? Or is he a lost soul, still searching for the love and nurturing he was deprived of as a child growing up on the mean streets of Brooklyn?

Since he's been incarcerated, not much light has been shed on the inner workings of Tyson. The handful of interviews he's granted haven't revealed anything new, and when THE RING received permission to visit him in late-August, it was with the understanding that it would be a no-holds-barred session. As Tyson put it, "When people want to know, 100 years from now, what Mike Tyson was thinking at this time in his life, they can find out by reading THE RING."

THE RING Managing Editor Nigel Collins met privately with Tyson in a conference room, far removed from the prison population. No guards, no lawyers, just two guys and a tape recorder. (Collins was THE RING'S editor-in-chief when Tyson was first featured on the cover of THE RING in the February 1986 issue.) Tyson initially seemed a little shy and almost whispered his first few answers. It wasn't long, however, before he relaxed, and conversation, and occasionally laughter, flowed freely.

Tyson maintained eye contact throughout the entire 90-minute interview and sometimes tapped his interrogator on the thigh, as if to make sure he was paying close attention. No topic was taboo; Tyson was unremittingly candid and didn't duck a single question. The result is a shockingly honest look at boxing's most significant figure since Muhammad Ali.

Jail changes people, some for the better, many more for the worse. During his conversation with THE RING, Tyson, 28, gave the impression of a man who is looking past the chaos and controversy that has surrounded him, has seen the brutal truth, and is ready to deal with it head-on.

Though Tyson frequently insisted he trusts no one, he paused before leaving the interview room, hand on the doorknob, and looked back over his shoulder.

"Write a good story," he said. "I trusted you."

What better way to honor that request than to let Tyson's own words speak for him.

At the beginning of Tyson's career, and through some of his championship run, his team included trainer Kevin Rooney (left), assistant manager Steve Lott (kneeling), and cornerman Matt Baranski (right). Of Rooney, Tyson said, "He believed he had more power than he actually did."

THE RING: Like Muhammad Ali, your boxing career has been suspended for approximately three years during your prime. Do you see any parallels between Ali and yourself?

Mike Tyson: There was only one Ali. There is no parallel. Ali committed himself to something for a reason, and I did mine by making bad choices, not being careful enough protecting myself.

THE RING: Ali fought a different style after he returned from his exile. Will the time you spent away from boxing change your style or affect the way you fight in any way?

MT: No. I train every day. I feel better now than I did at any time during my career. I'm not saying that's gonna make me fight better, but I believe it should. I run around eight miles a day. I do my exercises, my shadowboxing, all that I can do.

THE RING: You look pretty light. How much do you weigh right now?

MT: Around 214 pounds.

THE RING: You unified the heavyweight title at a time when boxing desperately needed an undisputed champion. Now the title is split again. How much damage do you feel splintered titles and the proliferation of divisions has done to the sport?

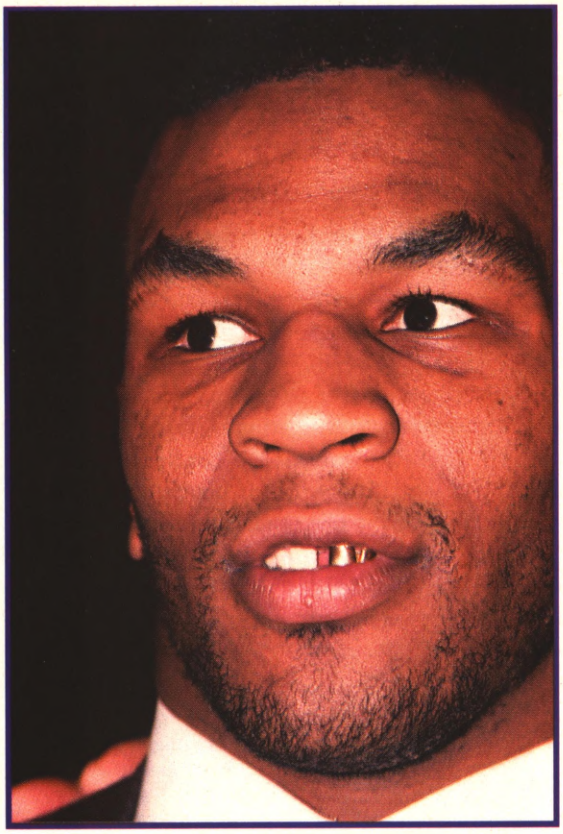
MT: I believe we have too many weight divisions now, too many titles. That's because boxing has become big business, and that doesn't allow people to become the best possible fighters they can. You no longer have to work as hard as you used to to become champion. I don't like all the weight divisions. You don't even know who the champion is. At one particular time, you didn't even have to be a fight fan to know who the champions were, because there were only seven of them. Now, you've got 16, 20 of 'em. It's incredible.

THE RING: If I could wave a magic wand and make you czar of boxing, what would be the one change you would make to improve the sport?

MT: Boxers would have pensions—a percentage of their money would go for pensions. Boxing is the only sport where anybody can get involved and make money. A fighter, in general, has no other method of making money except fighting. It can take a guy of low circumstances and put him in the high ranks. But on the other hand, if a guy abuses his skills and neglects them, he can lose his title.

THE RING: When you start fighting again, would you be willing to give up a percentage of your purse toward a pension fund?

MT: Only if we can organize. Fighters are not educated, academically. We come from a great fraternity of individuals, the Louises, the Nelsons, the Dempseys, the Jeffries. This is a great fraternity of men, and we continue to be decimated. As time goes by, boxing becomes more and more in the doldrums. We have to find something to do because we're going to become extinct. It won't be the American Medical Association—we're doing it to ourselves. People are too greedy and they destroy themselves. We have greedy bastards here, man, some rotten sons of bitches.



"Don King sometimes gets caught up in being so suspicious of everybody. I think that sometimes he even distrusts his friends. I think that that's just the life he leads. I don't think he trusts me totally."

THE RING: There have been certain people who have played an important part in both your life and your career. Let's play a variation on the word-association game: I'll give you a name and you respond with the first thing that pops into your head. Here goes. Cus D'Amato.

MT: An incredible teacher, an incredible man. I believe Mike Tyson and Cus D'Amato had great chemistry. That's the reason Mike Tyson was the fighter he was. He had great chemistry with his trainer, more so than Cus' other fighters that became successful, like Floyd Patterson and Jose Torres. I had more malice in my temperament, and I took orders well. When Cus told me what to do, I had confidence in him and executed what he told me to do.

THE RING: Camille Ewald. (Tyson's surrogate mother.)

MT: A loving lady. A lot brighter than people give her credit for. Everybody was always trying to manipulate her, especially the press. She just has a good heart, and when somebody comes to the door and wants to do a story, she's not rude, she doesn't fight back. That's because she's used to having Cus there to fight for her. She's very kind, and people try to take advantage of her because she's a very old lady.

THE RING: Jim Jacobs.

MT: A very different individual, very

mysterious. You never knew anything about him. He lived his whole life a secret. No one knew his situation. He always played the role and never got caught up in scandal, because if there's a scandal, you have to be investigated. He never allowed himself to be in that position. No one ever knew him.

THE RING: Did you know him?

MT: No, I never knew him.

THE RING: Bill Cayton.

MT: Bill Cayton is crude and sophisticated at the same time. His main objective is Bill Cayton. I don't take it personally, like I once did when my feelings were hurt. But I put myself in that position by trusting him.

THE RING: Kevin Rooney.

MT: Kevin Rooney? *(long pause)* This is a difficult one. We used to have a lot of good times. It's sad it had to end the way it did. I was doing my thing. He was doing his thing. He got caught between something he shouldn't have been caught in between. He believed he had more power than he actually did. He believed he was in the situation to stay forever. But that wasn't necessarily true. I was only with him because of Cus. He doesn't understand that Bill Cayton and Jim Jacobs didn't want him to be my trainer. They wanted to get Eddie Futch to train me. But I was loyal to him because I knew that if Kevin didn't train me, what else was he gonna do? He wasn't that successful as a fighter.

THE RING: Steve Lott. (An employee of Jacobs and Cayton, and one-time roommate of Tyson.)

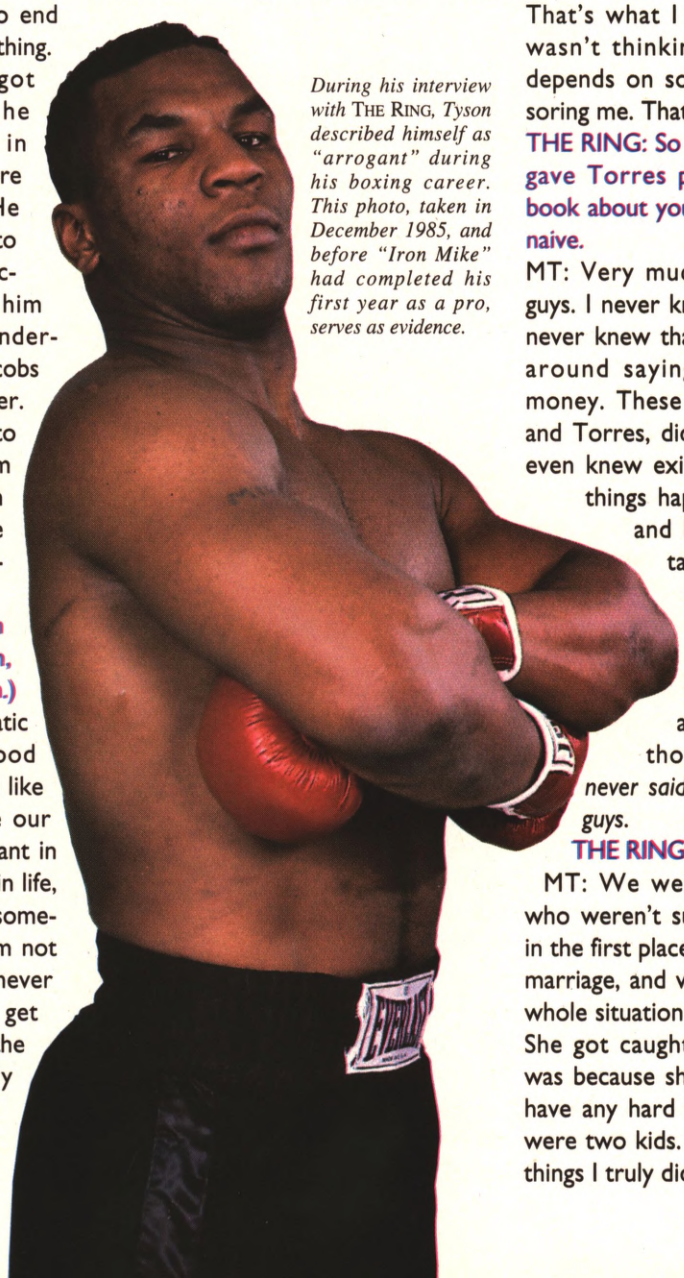
MT: Very cordial. A very diplomatic kind of guy. Steve Lott is a good man. But Steve is a businessman. I like Steve a great deal. We all have our own little way about what we want in life. Steve attacks what he wants in life, and I respect him for that. But sometimes there are complications. I'm not saying there are now, and you never know what will happen when I get out. But I would hate to be on the bad side of him because I really like Steve. I really like him.

THE RING: Jose Torres.

MT: An opportunist. For some reason he never liked me, though he pretended to be my friend for many years. I had a great deal of respect for him, and I couldn't believe he did the things he did. Then again, I always felt he envied me. It still hurts today that he wrote a book about me that was nothing but lies. I still haven't said anything disrespectful about him because I believe I'm better than that. But he hurt my feelings.

THE RING: HBO is making a movie about you based on Torres' book. Do you have any thoughts about that?

MT: Well, the movie is a bunch of lies, and what Jose wrote is bunch of lies. He asked me one time, and I said "Yes, you can write a book about me." I was a young kid, 20, 21 years old. He discussed something about pain, and how I like to hurt women, which wasn't necessarily true. I said that when I was younger, I loved to inflict pain. He walked around with a tape recorder trying to discuss these things that were damaging. But I wasn't talking about women. When I was fighting, I wanted to hurt the guy, I wanted to break him up. And I got that from the old fighters because they used to say what they were gonna do to guys. And I'm living back in their time, and I'm not thinking about having some kind of fear for the media. I'm not thinking about becoming a corporation and making commercials. I don't give a damn about Pepsi-Cola. I think about Joe Gans and Battling Nelson. Those were the guys I really admired. If those guys told me, f___ Pepsi, I would say f___ Pepsi. That's what I was into back then. I wasn't thinking about how my life depends on some corporation sponsoring me. That's not where I'm at.



During his interview with THE RING, *Tyson described himself as "arrogant" during his boxing career. This photo, taken in December 1985, and before "Iron Mike" had completed his first year as a pro, serves as evidence.*

THE RING: So you're saying when you gave Torres permission to write a book about you, you were still kind of naive.

MT: Very much so. I trusted these guys. I never knew the things he did. I never knew that at one time he went around saying that Cus stole his money. These guys, Floyd Patterson and Torres, did things to Cus I never even knew existed. I understand that things happen, just like with me and Kevin. But Cus always talked about these guys highly and about what great fighters they were. Then, when I found out from writers and other people, I thought, *Holy Moses, Cus never said bad things about these guys.*

THE RING: Robin Givens.

MT: We were two young people who weren't supposed to be married in the first place. We weren't ready for marriage, and we got caught up in the whole situation of being who we were. She got caught up in being who she was because she was with me. I don't have any hard feelings for Robin. We were two kids. Things happen. She did things I truly didn't like and don't agree

with, but what can you say? When all is said and done, we're all dead anyway. I don't want to be her friend. I don't want to hug and kiss and be cordial with her, but I have nothing bad or good to say about her.

THE RING: Don King.

MT: Don King is a good man. Don King is a businessman. Don King sometimes gets caught up in being so suspicious of everybody. I think that sometimes he even distrusts his friends. I think that that's just the life he leads. I don't think he trusts me totally.

THE RING: Is he paranoid?

MT: Paranoid! Anybody in the boxing business *deserves* to be paranoid. You have no other choice because being in boxing is like being in the mob. I'm your friend, and then tomorrow I'm your enemy. It depends on what you say and what you do.

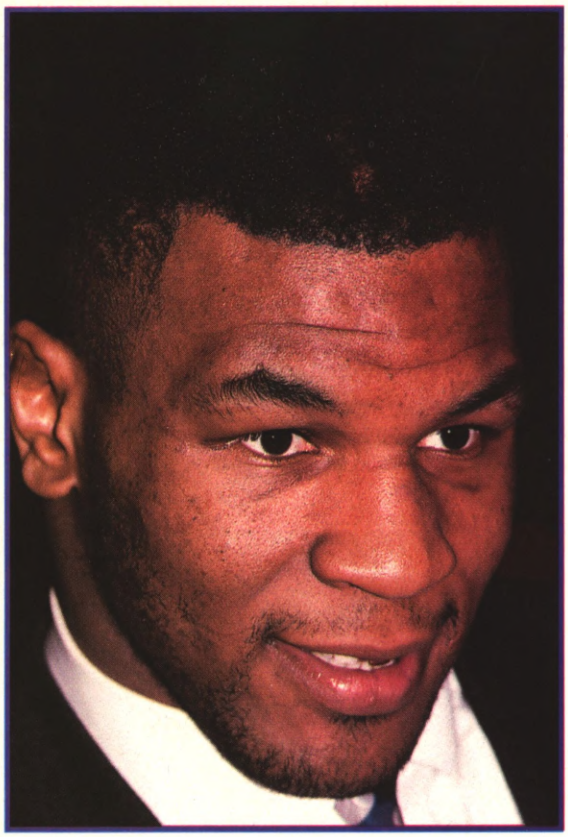
THE RING: Gregory Garrison.

MT: Gregory Garrison is an opportunist. But I was in a situation where I couldn't win. It's like I'm fighting you and your whole family. Me and you are fighting in your backyard with your whole family—and they have shotguns. And you expect me to win? Give me a break.

THE RING: Vincent Fuller.

MT: You know what I think? I think these guys really believed I raped this chick. I think I had to convince them that I was innocent. It was a disgusting display of legal tactics. I didn't know anything about legal stuff. The only thing I knew was that Don said these were good guys. I didn't know anything. I didn't know about F. Lee Bailey. We're blind to everything in this world until it happens to us. If you were to one day miss a light or your brakes go on you, and you hit somebody and kill them, you were blind that that could ever happen to you. You depended on your car. You say, "My car never did this to me before." Then it lets you down one time. But now you're not blind. You're in jail and you *know* anything can happen to you.

THE RING: Patricia Gifford.



"My life is useless. I don't care a damn about my life. That's why I'm so successful and everything, because I don't care."

MT: I think this is her claim to fame. I'm her famous little black trophy. She wants everybody to know she put Mike Tyson in jail. She could be a judge for 20 years, and the only thing people know about her is that she put Mike Tyson away.

THE RING: One gets the clear impression that you still think you got a raw deal. Is that an accurate description of how you feel?

MT: Absolutely, man. Everyone f___ed me. If you want to get down to the nitty-gritty, the judge f___ed me because she doesn't have anything better to do but put a little famous guy, who she knows was innocent, in jail. If I was guilty, she would have given me 60 years. If all 12 jurors felt I was guilty, I should have been given the maximum.

THE RING: Do you feel that racism played a role in your conviction?

MT: Man, racism is just so prevalent worldwide. Me being who I am, being a black man, I said a lot of things that irritated a lot of people at one time in my life. I said things, white people this, black people that. I've said things to irritate black people and white people, arrogant as I was. This was the opportunity to dump on me. And if they believe I'm their enemy, they should dump on me, because if they're my enemy I will kill them, too. Okay?

THE RING: Your life has been a series of sensational ups and downs. You went from juvenile delinquent to the heavyweight champion of the world. For a while, you had everything—fame, money, beautiful women, the adulation of millions. Then came your conviction and incarceration. As you look back at this point in your life, what is your biggest regret?

MT: I would have never fallen in love.

THE RING: You think falling in love is bad?

MT: For me, it probably is. I've never been successful in relationships where you really have a deep infatuation for a person.

THE RING: Besides the obvious, what has been the hardest part of being incarcerated?

MT: I don't know. It's so crazy, but I think I could do 100 years without flinching.

THE RING: Doesn't the boredom get to you?

MT: I used to think it would. When I first came, I used to say, "It's killing me. It's killing me. I want see my family." But when it really comes down to it, I really don't have anybody I want to go to. I've been alone all my life, and every time I did accept someone in my life, they've f___ed me. *(laughs)* Who do I really want to go to? I'll always take care of Camille. Now, she's 90 years old. Come on, odds are not on her side. As long as she's all right and my little daughter is all right, I don't give a damn about anything. Me? My

life is useless. I don't care a damn about my life. That's why I'm so successful and everything, because I don't care.

THE RING: Despite your tough-guy image, you're still a human being, experiencing the same emotions as the rest of us. Has there ever been a time since you've been in prison when you've broke down and cried?

MT: I'd never do that.

THE RING: Why's that? Don't you ever feel sorry for yourself?

MT: No, I can't do that. I just feel that everyone is against me. I try not to let myself get angry, and if I cried, I'd get angry at myself.

THE RING: You've been studying the Islamic religion. Has that been a comfort to you?

MT: It's helped me a great deal. You know, if it wasn't for Islam, I don't know what I'd be into. I would become part of society in this place. I'd probably be in here with these damned faggots, getting high. Man, I'm telling you, it's a helluva world in here. It's a world within a world.

THE RING: How has Islam helped you?

MT: It's given me a great outlook on life. I have to appreciate where I've been, where I haven't been. I could have been somewhere else worse. I could have been in Attica. I just praise the Lord that I'm not dead.

THE RING: What about your GED examination? When are you scheduled to take the retest?

MT: I don't know. You know, I believed I passed the first time.

THE RING: Are you saying you think they rigged the result?

MT: Come on, please. They'd let everyone in here go before they'd let me go. They would keep me in here alone.

THE RING: So you don't think you'll bother taking it again?

MT: I *may* take it. I'm not caught up in no damned GED. I read all these damned books and they drove me out of my mind. I must have read over 100 books. Friedrich Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Alexandre Dumas. It drove me nuts. I'm out of my mind now from reading all that s___. It was good stuff, but I never looked at things from that kind of perspective. Nietzsche told me there is no God, there's just superman. Man, I don't want to hear that crap. Tolstoy told me women ain't s___. Machiavelli told me don't trust nobody. I know that already! *(much laughter)* Don't tell me. I know this.

THE RING: You spent a lot of money on legal fees, unsuccessfully appealing your rape conviction. Do you wish you had kept the money in the bank?

MT: I did the time anyway, right? I'm not tripping on the money. I don't give a damn about money. I just wish I could have given it to someone who could have used it.

THE RING: There's been a lot of speculation concerning your financial status. A lot of people think you're broke. Is that true?

MT: I'm not broke. I'm not Mike Tyson rich, but I can do what I want. I can still buy things I want in prison. I can still send money to someone in another country if I want them to come see me.

THE RING: Because you're Mike Tyson, you have the potential to make millions of dollars as soon as you get out of jail and start fighting again. Other inmates won't have an opportunity to make a lot of money. So aren't you really in a different situation from most of the guys in here?

MT: Well, if I was that guy and I'd gotten this case, I would have gotten 60 years and nobody would have given a f___. The world we live in, man, it's incredible. But it's the only world we have.

THE RING: Overall, how would you describe the way the media has treated you throughout your career?

MT: They took some good shots at me. They got me pretty good. But I'm

Superbly conditioned through most of his career, Tyson said during his talk with THE RING *that he weighed about 214 pounds. He plans to begin boxing shortly after his release from prison.*

not an animal. I'm a human being. You, for one, said that. I love my family. I love my daughter. I'm not a child molester. I don't molest my daughter. I don't beat on women. A women may say I beat her, but have you ever seen Robin's face caved in? I hit Mitch Green in a street fight, and you saw what happened to his face. Robin never had no bruises.

THE RING: Is it important to you how the general public feels about you?

MT: I don't want anyone to love me. I just want them to respect me. Nobody comes into my face and calls me an asshole or a jerk and violates me without being violated back in return.

THE RING: There has been a lot of speculation about your relationship with King. Some people have suggested he filled a void in your life—the need for a father-figure. How to you respond to such psychoanalysis?

MT: Are the people who say that psychiatrists?

THE RING: No, most of them are sportswriters.

MT: No, most of 'em are assholes. *(more laughter)* How can you psychoanalyze somebody? Your job is to write about what you see, not write what you think. They should lose their jobs. I never had a father. So how's he's supposed to be my father? What would I know about a father-son relationship?

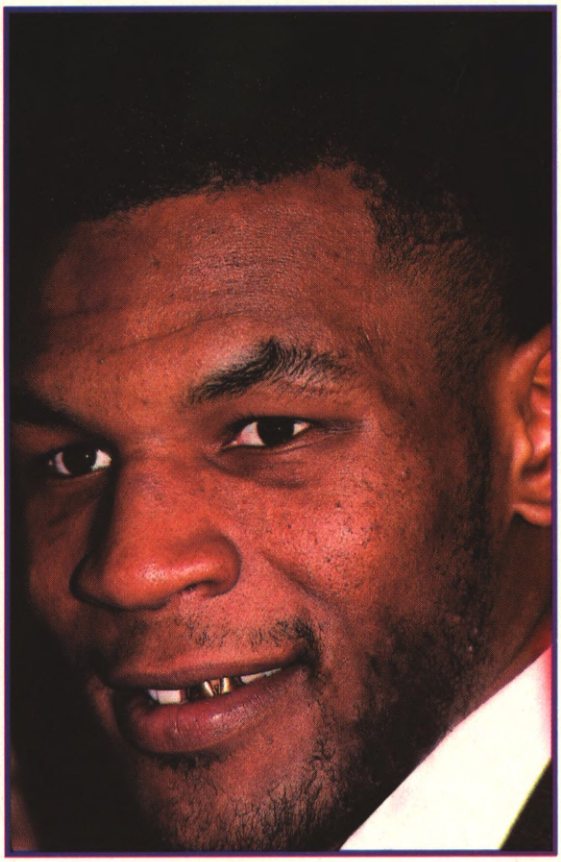
THE RING: Because you never had that kind of relationship, you were looking for it.

MT: That's not true at all. Okay?

THE RING: Will King be your promoter after you return to the ring? And will his recent indictment for insurance fraud influence your decision?

MT: Nothing is going to influence any decisions that I make, regardless. If I choose him to be my promoter, he's gonna be my promoter. I like Don.

THE RING: When you're released from prison, will you jump right back into boxing or take some time to relax and hang out?



"I just want to relax for a second, just a split-second. Not a month. I just want to relax for a second and think."

MT: Hey, I've relaxed for three years. I don't need any more relaxing.

THE RING: There has also been a lot of conjecture about who will train you. Can you give us any insight as to who will get the job?

MT: I hate everybody, man. I don't know.

THE RING: You hate all trainers?

MT: I hate everybody because he'll train me today and train another guy to fight me tomorrow. This is a joke. There's no loyalty in this business. This is like the mob, like the highest paid gun. Who gives a f___ about Mike Tyson? Give me a break, all right. Who actually cares about my well-being? The people who do are probably not capable of training me.

THE RING: Do you have any comments about the job Teddy Atlas, one of your amateur trainers, did in helping Michael Moorer win the heavyweight title?

MT: Did he help him? Do you believe he helped him a lot?

THE RING: I think he did in the motivational sense. I think he pushed him.

MT: But how? It's very difficult to say that because the only way you could actually help somebody win is if you're in there throwing punches. The guy always had it in him. I'm sure he would have won it with another trainer. It's just that the other trainers didn't give him the proper insight.

THE RING: But if you give a fighter the proper insight, isn't that helping him?

MT: To a certain extent, but trainers get more credit than they deserve. Trainers are glorified cheerleaders, the majority of them, anyway.

THE RING: Are there any active trainers you respect?

MT: I don't disrespect anyone. They just get more credit and more money than they deserve.

THE RING: Moorer could very well be one of your future opponents. What is your opinion of him as a fighter?

MT: I don't know. I've only seen him fight once or twice. And if I'm in my best shape and he's in his best shape and we fight, he couldn't win.

THE RING: Former champion Riddick Bowe and WBC champion Lennox Lewis are soon scheduled to fight each other. Who do you like in that fight?

MT: I don't know. I used to like Bowe, but not with the extra weight.

THE RING: What about Lewis? Have you seen him fight?

MT: Yeah, I've seen him fight a couple of times. He looks pretty good. I don't know what the competition is like out there. Sometimes we can think we are better than what we really are. I might

The highlight of Tyson's reign as heavyweight champion was his first-round annihilation of Michael Spinks (left). His last effort was a draining 12-round points win over Razor Ruddock in June 1991 (right). He's not yet 30, and there's presumably lots more fight left in him.

get out there and be disaster. I don't think I will, but I might.

THE RING: Do you have a timetable for your comeback? Will you be ready for a title fight right away or will you want a few tuneups?

MT: I just want to relax for a second, just a split-second. Not a month. I just want to relax for a second and think. I'm in here, and it's totally different atmosphere in here than it is outside. And I just don't know what to expect yet. I've got to get my life together.

THE RING: What, besides the passing of time, is the biggest difference between the Mike Tyson who was imprisoned almost three years ago and Mike Tyson today?

MT: The Mike Tyson who was not in prison and was out on the street being champion loved everybody, thought everybody was nice. Now, Mike Tyson hates the world. That's just a fact. I hate everybody. I know they say, "No, you can't hate the world, don't be bitter." But I just hate everybody. Well, the majority, maybe 99 percent.

THE RING: Do you feel that you owe boxing fans anything?

MT: I'm gonna owe them until the day I die. You always owe those guys. But they don't like you, anyway.

THE RING: It's kind of strange you would say that, because while the establishment put you in prison, there's been a lot of support from the fans. Most of them never turned their backs on you. Doesn't that make you feel good?

MT: They do that more because they feel sorry for somebody's circumstances. I don't want anyone feeling sorry for me. I know who I am and what I am. This doesn't trip me out. I understand that people are interested in me for what I do. And they should not expect anything else out of me. ■

100 Years Of Boxing

THE BEST OF THE BEST

Section Compiled By Steve Farhood

Simply the best ain't so simple. In the 100-plus years of the modern era, great fights and great fighters have created a hallowed ring history. But picking the best of the best and the greatest of the great creates nothing but debate. Fortunately, real fight fans live to argue.

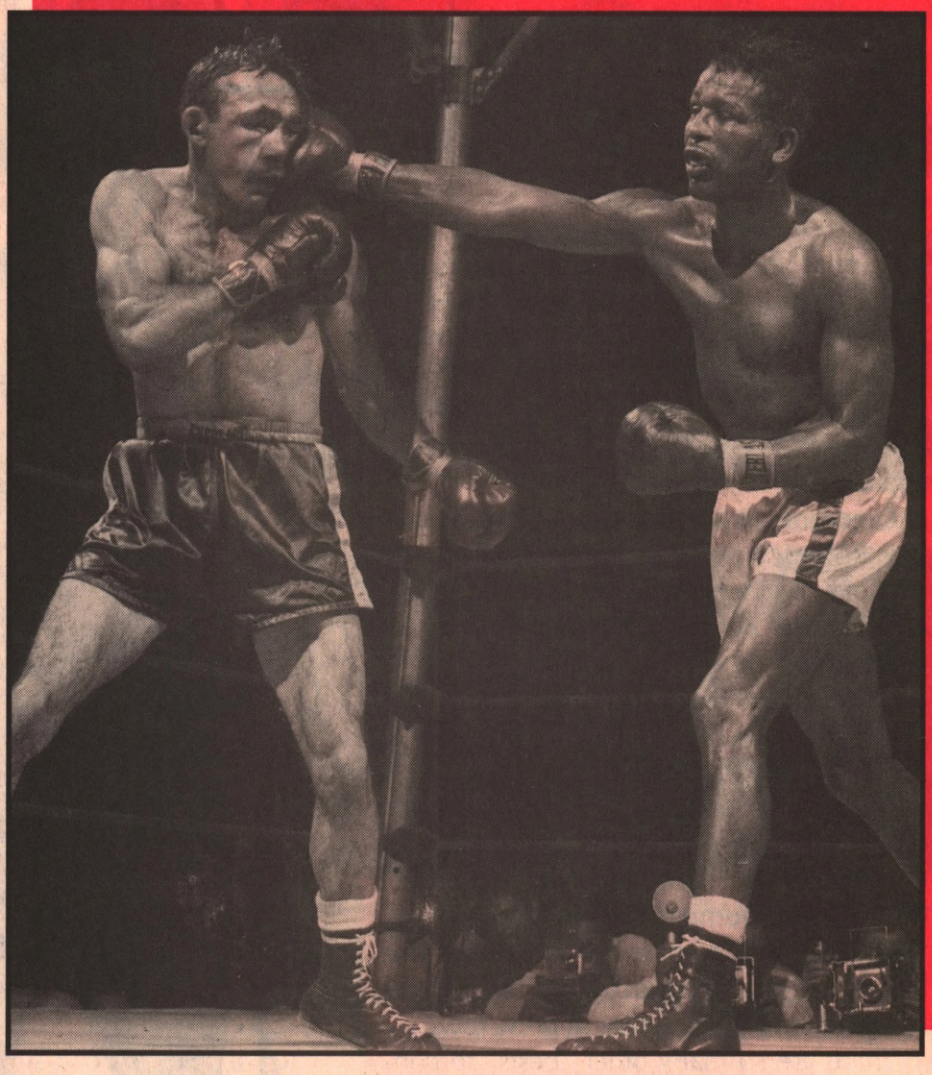
Everyone, it seems, agrees that Sugar Ray Robinson was the greatest fighter of all-time. But who was the greatest pure boxer? Was Benny Leonard better than Willie Pep? Or was Muhammad Ali better than both of them?

What about the greatest fight? The *biggest* fight was certainly Ali-Frazier I. But was it the best? Or was Ali-Frazier III even better? And how about Zale-Graziano? Or Hagler-Hearns? And don't dare forget Dempsey-Firpo. How many fights do you remember that saw the heavyweight champion of the world knocked onto a typewriter in press row?

There are so many other "bests" to consider. Was Joe Louis the best puncher? Or was it Archie Moore? Or, blow for blow, Earnie Shavers? And is Eddie Futch the best trainer ever? Or should Ray Arcel wear that label? Then there's the best promoter. Tex Rickard? Mike Jacobs? Don King?

On the following pages, THE RING offers its best of the best. If you get angry with some of our selections, don't keep your feelings inside. Write us. We can take it; we have the best chin in publishing.

BEST FIGHTER
Sugar Ray Robinson



Name the greatest puncher ever, or the best pure boxer, and you're sure to get an argument. But Sugar Ray Robinson is the number-one *fighter* in ring history. If that's not a fact, it's at least become accepted as the truth. Thirty years after his retirement, Robinson remains at the head of the all-time ratings. Three-hundred years from now, it'll probably be no different.

Born Walker Smith Jr. in 1921, Robinson dreamed of being a doctor, was destined to become a performer, and described himself as a gladiator. While the record books alone don't elevate him above the rest of the Hall of Famers, he was 85-0 as an amateur and, at one point in 1951, 118-1-2 as a pro. He fought professionally from 1940 to 1965, compiling an overall mark of 175-19-6 (110) with 2 no-contests. For those who overrate statistics, it should be noted that 10 of Robinson's losses came after he had turned 40.

The 5'11½" Robinson was the rarest of rarities, a quick and technically sound boxer who featured a dependable chin and kayo power in both fists. ("Generations of fighters copied his style," said Archie Moore.) Incredibly, his accomplishments matched his skills. Consider:

•He won the vacant world welterweight title in 1946 and made five successful defenses before vacating and moving up to middleweight.

•He won the 160-pound crown an amazing five times.

•He should have won the light heavyweight title, but succumbed to heat exhaustion vs. Joey Maxim in 1952.

•He fought 18 different world champions and beat, among others, Henry Armstrong, Jake LaMotta (five times), Kid Gavilan, Rocky Graziano, Gene Fullmer, and Carmen Basilio.

•He even survived a two-year retirement in the mid-'50s, when he left the ring to begin a career as a dancer. And he did it all with panache, as determined to flaunt his greatness as to build his legend.

"I don't know what inscription family members are planning to put on Sugar Ray Robinson's gravestone," wrote *Newsday's* Joe Gergen after Robinson's death in 1989. "But if they want to honor the man for his place in the history of his sport, three words will suffice: 'Pound for pound ... '"

BEST CHIN
Jake LaMotta

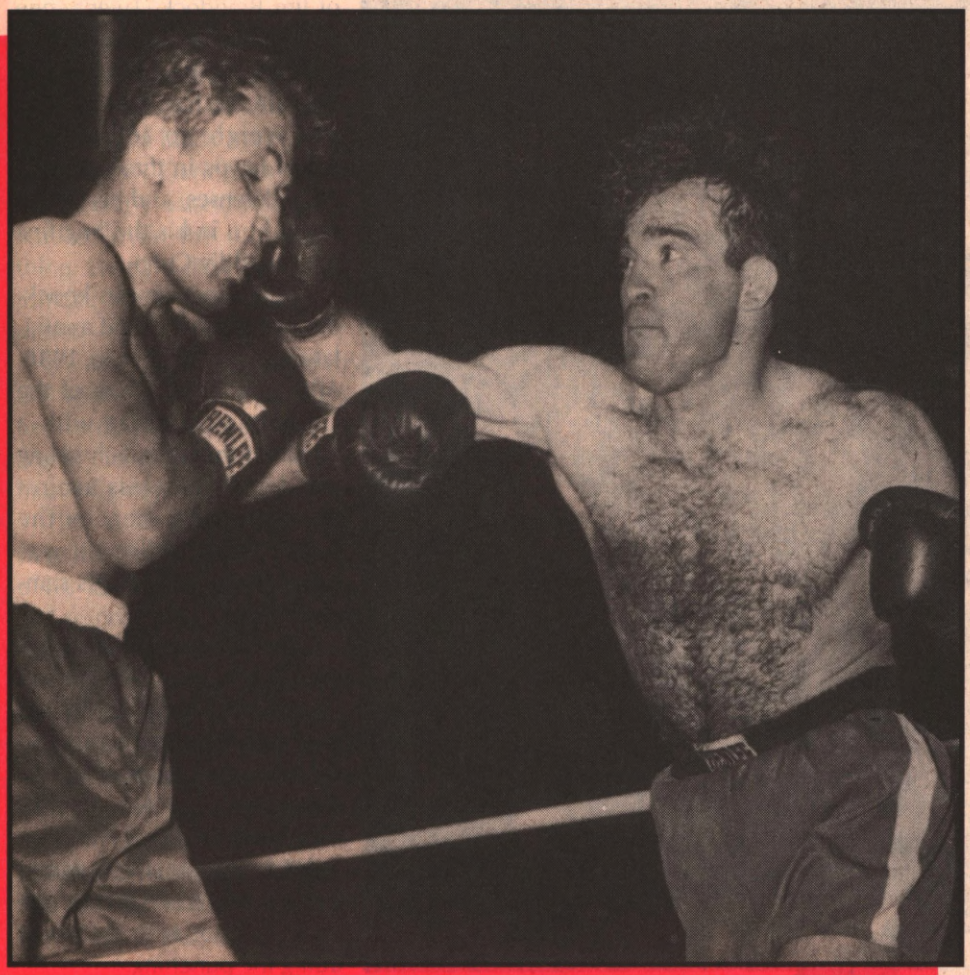
"I never went down, Ray. Ya never got me down." The final scene of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, which saw Sugar Ray Robinson capture the middleweight title from Jake LaMotta via 13th-round TKO at Chicago Stadium, captured the essence of "The Raging Bull."

Wrote Gene Ward in the New York *Daily News*, "Blood trickling from the puffed, raw welts under his eyes, and his nose a splotch of crimson, the bully boy from the Bronx groped his way blindly along the ropes toward his corner, looking for all the world like a drowning man attempting to pull himself to safety."

All that mattered to LaMotta was that he wasn't *carried* to his corner. Throughout the last few rounds of his third title defense, the New Yorker had worn out Robinson's fists. But that LaMotta finished on his feet shouldn't have surprised anyone. It was the 96th bout of his career, and his sixth and final clash with Robinson. In addition, LaMotta had previously faced the likes of Fritzie Zivic, Lloyd Marshall, Tommy Bell, Holman Williams, Bob Satterfield, Laurent Dauthuille, and Marcel Cerdan. *No one* had knocked him down. In fact, LaMotta would fight 855 rounds and 102 bouts before being floored for the first and only time, on New Year's Eve, 1952, by light heavyweight Danny Nardico.

LaMotta fantasized about knocking out Joe Louis, and if a middleweight is going to match himself with heavyweights, he better have a good chin. Even in his dreams.

Recalling the start of his boxing career for *True* magazine, LaMotta said, "Once I got to worrying about whether I could take a punch. If I couldn't, I'd never make it to the title. I went up to [friend and sparmate Pete Petrillo] in the gym and said, 'Do me a favor. Hit me on the chin as hard as you can.'



"He didn't want to because it went against him to hit somebody who was defenseless, especially a friend. I finally persuaded him. With my hands down and my chin exposed, he set himself and threw a right. It hurt. The jarring effect of a sock like that is something you can't understand until you experience it. But I didn't go down and I didn't feel so groggy that I couldn't have recovered ... After that, I knew I could take anything in the ring, that head punches would never knock me cold."

LaMotta often invited his opponents to take their best shot. Until the very end, no one could put him down. Not even Ray.

BEST PUNCHER
Joe Louis

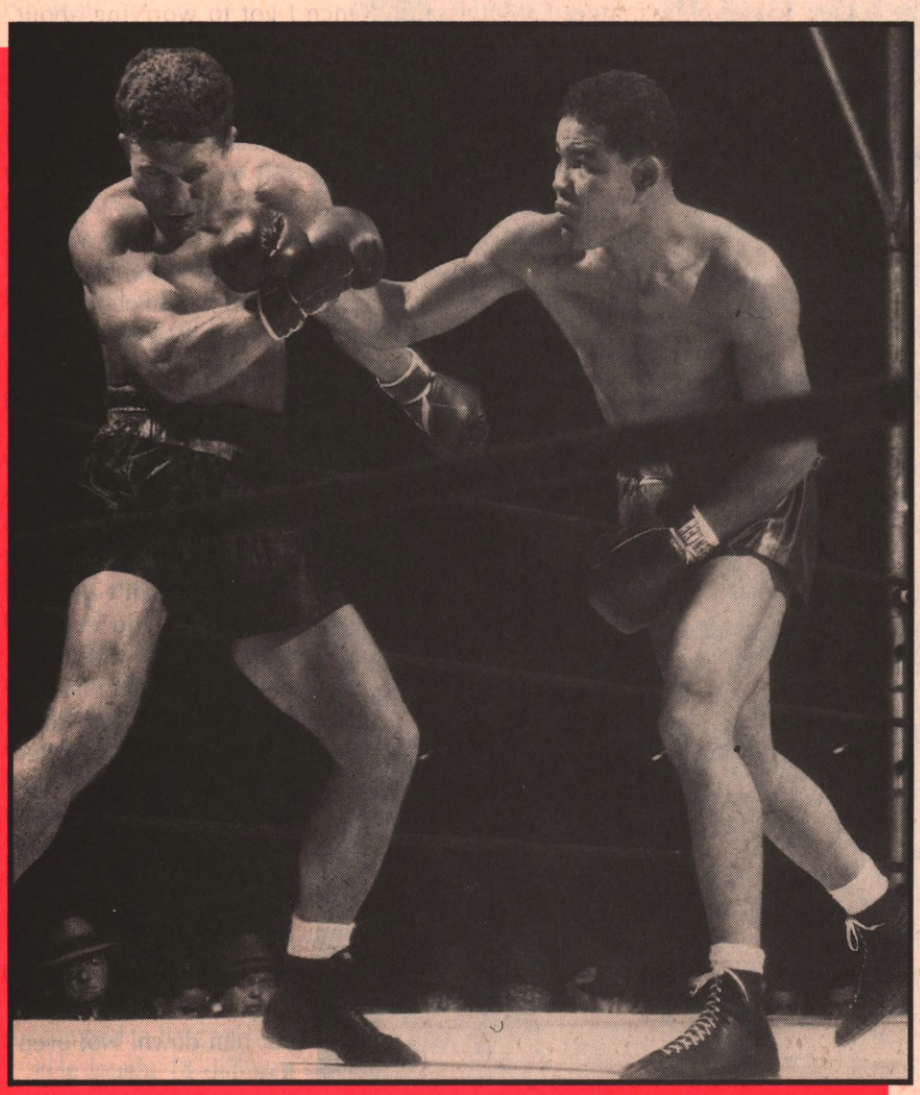
Punch-for-punch, and maybe even pound-for-pound, there might've been harder punchers than Joe Louis. But not fight-for-fight. With a thudding jab, an underrated left hook, and a shockingly short, quick, and devastating straight right, "The Brown Bomber" made a career of paralyzing the finest heavyweights his era could offer.

In a different era, perhaps Louis would have been a slick boxer like his mentor, Holman Williams. But he followed the advice of his trainer, Jack Blackburn, who told him, "You can't get nowhere nowadays trying to outpoint fellows in the ring. It's mighty hard for a colored boy to win decisions. The dice are loaded against you. You gotta knock 'em out to get anywhere. Let your right fist be the referee. Don't ever forget that."

Relying on nothing more than his natural strength, Louis was scoring knockouts long before he teamed with Blackburn; he stopped 43 of 50 amateur foes. As a pro, however, he learned footwork and balance. The result was the perfect punching machine.

Before completing his second year as a pro, Louis had already kayoed Primo Carnera, Max Baer, and Paulino Uzcudun, who hadn't previously been dropped in his 12-year career.

"That kid sure can punch," said Baer. "I fact, I never knew where I was until I finally reached my dressing room."



Louis won the heavyweight title with a knockout of Jim Braddock. Twenty-one of his record 25 successful defenses came by kayo. He became the first champion at any weight to score first-round kayos in three consecutive defenses, and his power saved him in his thrilling first bout vs. Billy Conn.

Louis' most famous knockout was his first-round annihilation of Schmeling in 1938. After Louis broke two of the German's vertebrae with a punch to the back, Schmeling was left defenseless against the hardest hitter in the world. What followed was brutal, even by boxing's standards.

"The slow-motion picture of the 124 seconds of the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling fight is probably the most faithful recording ever made of human savagery," wrote Henry McLemore of United Press.

With anyone else, it would have been overstating the case. But not with Joe Louis doing the punching.

BEST BOXER
Benny Leonard

When asked what made him so difficult to hit, the inimitable Willie Pep said, "I could run like hell." Benny Leonard, born Benjamin Leiner in 1896, was no less defensively proficient—and no less candid. If asked the same question, the lightweight legend might have answered, "I didn't like to get my hair mussed." And he would have meant it.

When it came to protecting himself, Leonard had few peers; he once play-sparred with Joe Benjamin while standing on the white back line of a handball court. Benjamin never touched him—and Leonard never lifted his feet off the line. But defense alone doesn't make a great boxer. That distinction requires offensive skills as well. And Leonard, who reigned as world champion from 1917 to 1925, was as complete a fighter as the first half of the modern era could offer.

Necessity initially forced Leonard to favor beauty over brawn; as a teenager, he boxed without his parents' knowledge, and if he came home with a cut, a black eye, or a split lip, it would have been a giveaway. During his pro career, he refined his skills by regularly attending fights and dissecting styles. He studied even the four-round prelim kids. One other thing: Leonard developed his reflexes by sparring with a tomcat. We're not kidding, and we don't think he was, either.

In an era dominated by the ferocity of Jack Dempsey and the fighting spirit of Mickey Walker, Leonard, who turned pro at 16 and was crowned a world champion at 21, was a precursor to the thinking man's fighter.

"It was his wonderful 'head' that gave him his mastery over the challenger," *The National Police Gazette* wrote of his 1922 title defense vs. Rocky Kansas.

Consider how Leonard prepared for one of his greatest challenges, his 1917 showdown with reigning featherweight champion Johnny Kilbane: "Johnny's a great boxer, tricky as they make them, and dangerous. But I know just how and when to beat him. He has a sort of double feint-shift, but he leaves himself open for a flash of a second when he tries it, and that's when I'll get him."

Kilbane fell in round three, suffering his first stoppage loss in 122 bouts. And Leonard nodded knowingly, every hair in place.

BEST MANAGER
Jack "Doc" Kearns

In today's sue-first, punch-later boxing world, a manager is only as good as his lawyers. It hasn't always been that way. In Doc Kearns' day, a manager was limited only by his imagination. And that made Kearns far more dangerous than Jack Dempsey, Mickey Walker, or any of the other world champions he handled.

"In those times," he understated, "you got away with everything possible."

Kearns was larger than life, and fantasy, too. Maybe Shelly Finkel knows Donald Trump, but Kearns, born John Leo McKernon in Waterloo, Michigan, claimed Tex Rickard as a poker partner, Wyatt Earp as a manager, Jack London as a boating mate, Henry Ford as a neighbor, and Al Capone as a business acquaintance.

Best-known for his work—and play—with Dempsey and Walker in the '20s and '30s, Kearns also handled, at one point or another, Abe Attell, Benny Leonard, Jackie Fields, Joey Maxim, and Archie Moore. You think Don King was the first hustler to switch allegiances in the middle of a fight? On the morning of December 17, 1952, Kearns managed light heavyweight champion Maxim. On the morning of December 18, he managed Moore, who had captured the title the night before.

A great manager maximizes his fighter's purse while minimizing the risk. It's estimated that while fighting under Kearns, Dempsey made $19-million and Walker $6-million. Dempsey won the title by knocking out Jess Willard in 1919. According to Kearns, he *minimized the risk* by encasing "The Manassa Mauler's" hand wraps in plaster of Paris. (The story was denied by Dempsey.) Kearns also steered Dempsey to boxing's first million-dollar gate, in 1921 vs. blown-up light heavyweight Georges Carpentier. But it was the not-so-good doctor's rape of Shelby, Montana, that made him a legend. In 1923, Dempsey defended against yet another light heavyweight, Tommy Gibbons, but only after Kearns secured $220,000 of a $300,000 guarantee. Fighter and manager left town with two suitcases of cash, while four Shelby banks went bankrupt.

Wrote columnist Dan Parker, "If [Kearns] had a special talent for acquiring money without toil or strict observance of some of the Commandments, he was generous with it to his friends."

That's another way of saying Kearns never screwed the little guy. Maybe he wasn't Robin Hood, but at least he wasn't Robbin' Hood, either.

BEST TRAINER
Eddie Futch

Any guy with a Q-tip tucked behind his ear can teach a fighter to hook off his jab. Only the great trainers, however, impart the lessons of life. Perhaps it's not surprising, then, that Eddie Futch, 83 and full of wisdom, knowledge, and patience, can discuss Keats and Khayyam at breakfast, and Ketchel and Kalambay at lunch.

It's important to Futch that he's understood. "I am *in* boxing, but not *of* boxing," he likes to say. Translation: Someone *of* boxing wouldn't have surrendered after the 14th round of the Thrilla in Manila. And think about this: When Futch elected to spare Joe Frazier further punishment, he thought his fighter was ahead on points!

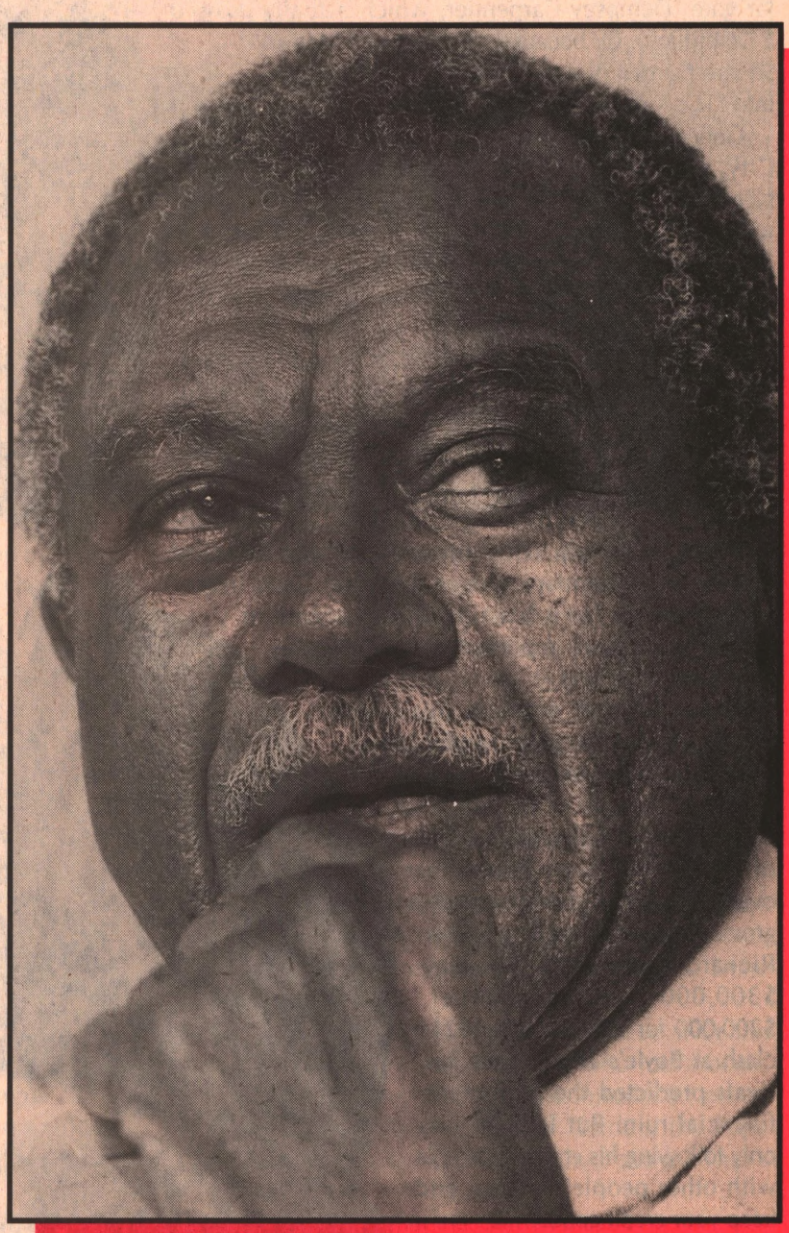
Futch was born in Hillsboro, Mississippi, and raised in Detroit. He was a Golden Gloves champion at lightweight and, believe it or not, a favorite sparring mate of Joe Louis. Then an amateur light heavyweight, Louis liked to work with Futch because—why else?—his friend was so smart. When Futch stopped boxing because of a heart murmur, he began teaching, leaving Louis to find someone his own size to chase.

In 60 years, Futch has produced not only a handful of world champions, but also several championship-caliber trainers; some of his fighters (George Benton, Thell Torrence, Hedgemon Lewis, Freddie Roach) ended up working as his assistants. He started in Detroit, guiding top-10 contenders like Lester Felton, Big Boy Brown, and Jimmy Edgar. After he moved to Los Angeles, he developed his first world champion, welterweight Don Jordan. In the late-'60s, Yank Durham brought Joe Frazier all the way from Philadelphia, and Futch had his first star. Some of the fighters who followed: Duane Bobick, Ken Norton, Larry Holmes, Alexis Arguello, Mike McCallum, Marlon Starling, Michael Spinks, and Virgil Hill.

As if to reestablish his greatness, Futch guided Riddick Bowe to the heavyweight title in 1992. In addition to "Big Daddy," he currently trains bantamweight contender Wayne McCullough and rising light heavyweight and '92 Olympian Montell Griffin. Forty-year-old workaholics should be so busy.

"When he says do this or do that," says Bowe, "I do it. I don't even think about it. Ain't nobody knows more about boxing than 'Papa Smurf.'"

Ain't too many who know more about life, either.



BEST PROMOTER
Tex Rickard

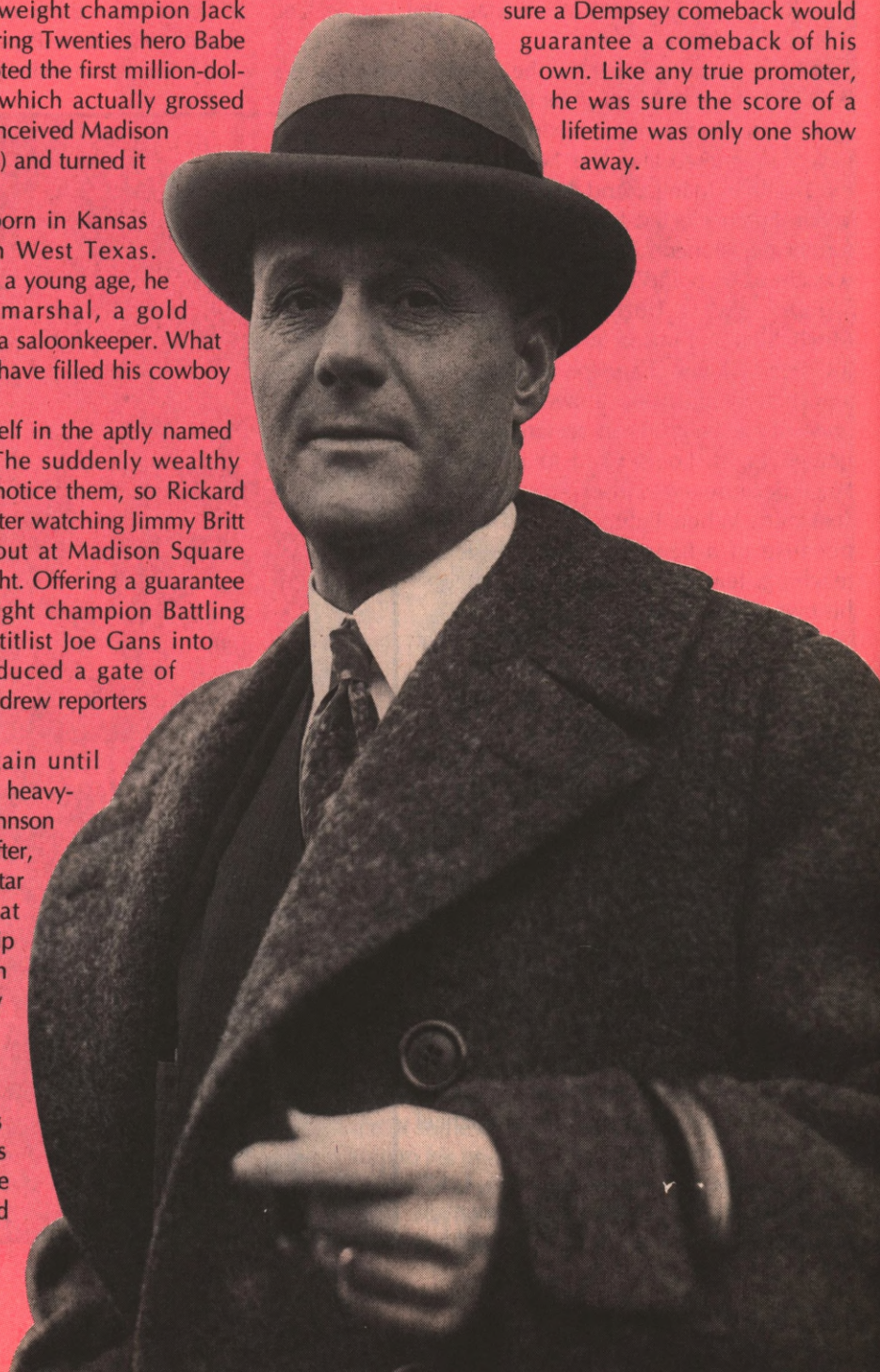
His file is among the thickest in THE RING's archives, and almost every one of the yellowed newspaper and magazine clips describes Tex Rickard not only as "the greatest promoter in history," but also as "the man who popularized boxing." Maybe that's because he built heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey into every bit the Roaring Twenties hero Babe Ruth was. Or because he promoted the first million-dollar gate (Dempsey-Carpentier, which actually grossed *$1.6*-million). Or because he conceived Madison Square Garden (the third version) and turned it into "The Mecca Of Boxing."

George Lewis Rickard was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in West Texas. Needing to support his family at a young age, he worked as a cattle hand, a marshal, a gold prospector in the Klondike, and a saloonkeeper. What he knew about boxing couldn't have filled his cowboy hat.

In 1906, Rickard found himself in the aptly named town of Goldfield, Nevada. The suddenly wealthy denizens wanted the world to notice them, so Rickard was asked to make headlines. After watching Jimmy Britt and Terry McGovern duke it out at Madison Square Garden, he decided on a big fight. Offering a guarantee of $32,000, he talked lightweight champion Battling Nelson and legendary former titlist Joe Gans into coming west. Their bout produced a gate of $69,715, and more importantly, drew reporters from across the land.

Rickard didn't promote again until putting together the controversial heavyweight title fight between Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries in 1910. Soon after, he attached himself to the rising star of Dempsey. It's estimated that over seven years, their partnership grossed almost $8-million. When Rickard guaranteed Dempsey $300,000 and Carpentier $200,000 for their historic 1921 clash at Boyle's Thirty Acres, his rivals predicted the promoter's financial ruin. But Rickard was only following his credo: "Gamble with other people's money and keep your credit good."

Rickard was hustling until the end. At the time of his death in 1929, he was trying to talk the recently retired Dempsey back into the ring. In July 1928, Rickard had lost a small fortune promoting Gene Tunney-Tom Heeney at Yankee Stadium, and he was sure a Dempsey comeback would guarantee a comeback of his own. Like any true promoter, he was sure the score of a lifetime was only one show away.



BEST FIGHT SITE

Madison Square Garden

New York, New York

In 115 years, there have been three sites and four structures, but for fight fans, Madison Square Garden will always be the magical "House That Tex Built" on Eighth Avenue, between 49th and 50th Streets.

Pep-Saddler. McLarnin-Leonard. Robinson-Fullmer. Graziano-Cochrane.

In the early-'20s, promoter Tex Rickard convinced a Wall Street syndicate to invest $6-million in the construction of "the new Garden." The first professional fight card, headlined by light heavyweight champion Paul Berlenbach's defense against Jack Delaney, drew 17,675 fans. The capacity for boxing was about 18,500, but on certain nights the fire marshals looked the other way; in 1941, the Fritzie Zivic-Henry Armstrong rematch drew 23,190.

Conn-Bettina. Louis-Marciano. Ross-Armstrong. Foster-Tiger. Canzoneri-Ambers.

In the 42 years of its existence, the Garden hosted every type of event imaginable, but was most closely associated with The Sweet Science. The omnipotent International Boxing Club maintained its offices in the building, as did The Ring. The Friday Night Fights were held there. Willie Pep turned pro there. Joe Louis defended the heavyweight title eight times at the Garden. Beau Jack-Bob Montgomery produced a staggering gate of $35-million (with the help of the sale of war bonds). And Cassius Clay-Doug Jones sold out the house despite a newspaper strike. In all, the Garden featured a record 129 world title fights, from heavyweight to flyweight. The last boxing show was held on December 15, 1967, when Luis Rodriguez outpointed Bennie Briscoe.

Flowers-Greb. Gavilan-Graham. LaMotta-Fox. Griffith-Paret. Ortiz-Elorde.

Harry Markson, a former president of Madison Square Garden Boxing, tells of flying to Italy to negotiate with Nino Benvenuti for a middleweight title fight vs. Emile Griffith.

"I was in a group that had an audience with the Pope," he says. "There was a cardinal who had a board with all the visitors on it. When he introduced me as Harry Markson of Madison Square Garden, the Pope said, 'Madison Square Garden. Hah. Boxing.' That's what boxing meant in those days."

No, Harry, that's what the *Garden* meant.

BEST FIGHT

Muhammad Ali KO 14 Joe Frazier

October 1, 1975
Quezon City, Philippines

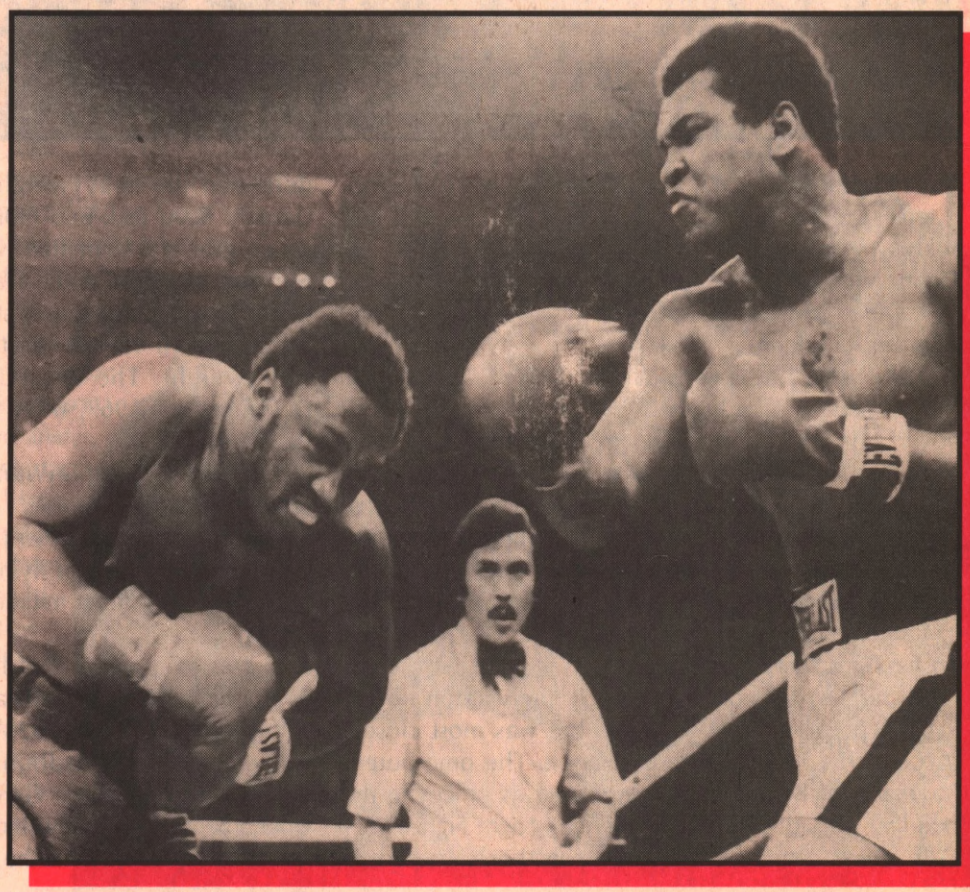
It wasn't the *biggest* fight ever. That distinction will always be reserved for Ali-Frazier I. There weren't the dramatic knockdowns of Dempsey-Firpo or the bloody visages of Zale-Graziano. There wasn't one unforgettable round, as with Hagler-Hearns. The fight didn't end with a conclusive punch or the dramatic announcement of a close and controversial decision. But when you combine the stakes, the timing, and the fight itself, The Thrilla in Manila tops them all.

Ali, 33, was the defending heavyweight champion of the world. Frazier, the former titlist, was 31. The longtime rivals were among the most recognizable figures on the globe, largely because they had split a pair of stop-the-world superfights. Their styles meshed perfectly, as did their personalities. Added to the electric mix at the Araneta Coliseum was a sense of desperation: Both fighters knew the end was lurking, and a potentially devastating defeat could be averted only by summoning a performance that might leave them empty.

A great fight must include changes in momentum, and The Thrilla in Manila was comprised of three clearly defined chapters. Frazier was a notorious slow starter, and rounds one through four were taken by Ali. From the fifth to the 11th, Frazier found his relentless left-hooking rhythm, and he punished Ali with hooks to the head and body. At the end of the 10th, Ali inched back to his corner, defeat hanging all over him. "It was," he said later, "next to death."

Then, suddenly, *miraculously*, whatever makes Ali "The Greatest" seized him, and he started to punch. He took the 12th and 13th, and in the process all but closed Frazier's left eye. The 14th was uglier still, with Frazier unable to see Ali's streaking right hands. When "Smokin' Joe" plopped on his stool, trainer Eddie Futch told him, "That's it, Joe. You can't see." Frazier objected, of course, but referee Carlos Padilla was already waving the fight over. Instead of jumping for joy, Ali collapsed to the canvas. Maybe he could have fought another round, maybe not.

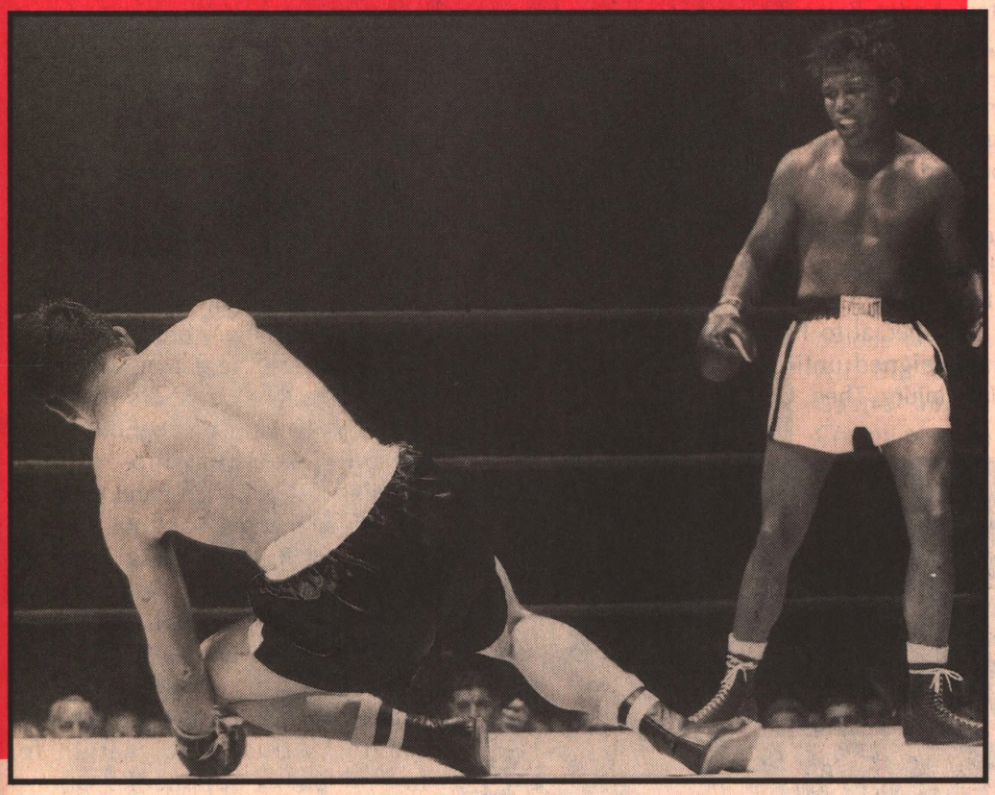
While Ali managed to outlast Frazier, *both* fighters left the ring empty, but with their legends fuller than ever. One newspaper headline summed it up in seven simple words: "It Was The Glory Of Our Times."



BEST PUNCH

Sugar Ray Robinson KO 5 Gene Fullmer

May 1, 1957
Chicago Stadium, Chicago, Illinois



Sometimes the best is perfect.

Fittingly, it was the perfect fighter who landed the perfect punch. It came against the perfect opponent, at the perfect time. And it produced the perfect result. Otherwise, there wasn't much to it.

Those unfamiliar with the circumstances surrounding the best punch ever thrown might presume a fighter as instinctual as Sugar Ray Robinson let go his ideally arced left hook in response to the moment. After all, if Yogi Berra had worn gloves and trunks, he would've said, "You can't think and fight at the same time." But it wasn't like that at all. For one of the few occasions in his career, Robinson felt it necessary to watch tapes of his opponent. And he had noticed that when Gene Fullmer threw a right to the body ...

Five months before, Fullmer had captured the world middleweight title by outpointing a 35-year-old Robinson at Yankee Stadium. With Fullmer capable of smothering and muscling The Sugarman, there was little reason to think there'd be a turnaround in the rematch, and the champion climbed through the ropes a 3-1 favorite.

For three rounds, Fullmer had Robinson acting his age. The challenger rebounded in the fourth, but against a strong, steel-chinned opponent like Fullmer, victory still seemed a miracle away. Then, almost halfway through the fifth, Robinson invited that right to the body, and Fullmer responded. "His jaw," Robinson wrote in his autobiography, "looked as big as any of the jaws on the Mount Rushmore monuments."

Almost without moving his feet or turning his shoulders, Robinson exploded with his hook. It caught Fullmer on the point of the chin and instantly sent him sprawling. He was brave enough to attempt to struggle to his feet, but referee Frank Sikora tolled 10 at the 1:27 mark.

"Why did they stop the fight?" the suddenly former champion asked his manager, Marv Jenson.

"They counted you out," Jenson replied.

"Well, that's a pretty good reason," said Fullmer.

And a pretty good reason why Robinson, middleweight champion for the fourth time, was as close to perfection as any fighter who ever lived.

BEST COME-FROM-BEHIND WIN

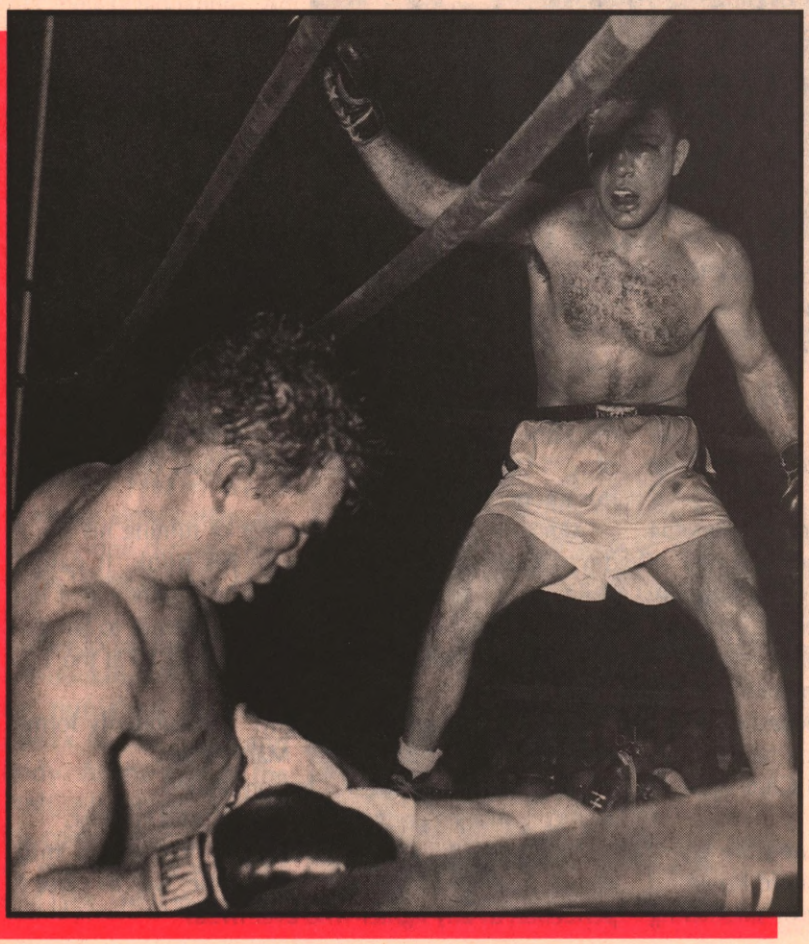
Jake LaMotta KO 15 Laurent Dauthuille

September 13, 1950
The Olympia, Detroit, Michigan

It was the saddest of fates. Andre Barraut, Laurent Dauthuille's manager, told him to box. Hymie Blaustein, the Montreal-based Frenchman's trainer, instructed him to trade. Barraut and Blaustein screamed at their charge, each taking an ear, then at each other. Dauthuille rose from his stool and elected to listen to his trainer, which a fighter is wont to do. Three minutes later, he was listening to referee Lou Handler scream "10 and out!" only 13 seconds before he was to be crowned middleweight champion of the world.

The middleweight title was special to France. The beloved Marcel Cerdan had reigned until losing to LaMotta because of a shoulder injury. Then, only weeks before the rematch, Cerdan was killed in a plane crash. It could be argued Dauthuille wasn't even the best 160-pounder in his homeland; he had twice lost to contender Robert Villemain. But Dauthuille had outpointed LaMotta in 1949. Moreover, with the winner already signed to defend against Sugar Ray Robinson, maybe LaMotta would look to the future at the expense of the present.

Indeed, LaMotta, a 9-5 favorite, seemed tranquilized. Wrote *Time*, he "worked like a man in a daze." He moved toward the stocky Frenchman, but rarely threw punches. There were handicaps: The champion injured his right thumb and boxed with a cut and swollen left eye. Still, his lethargy was curious.



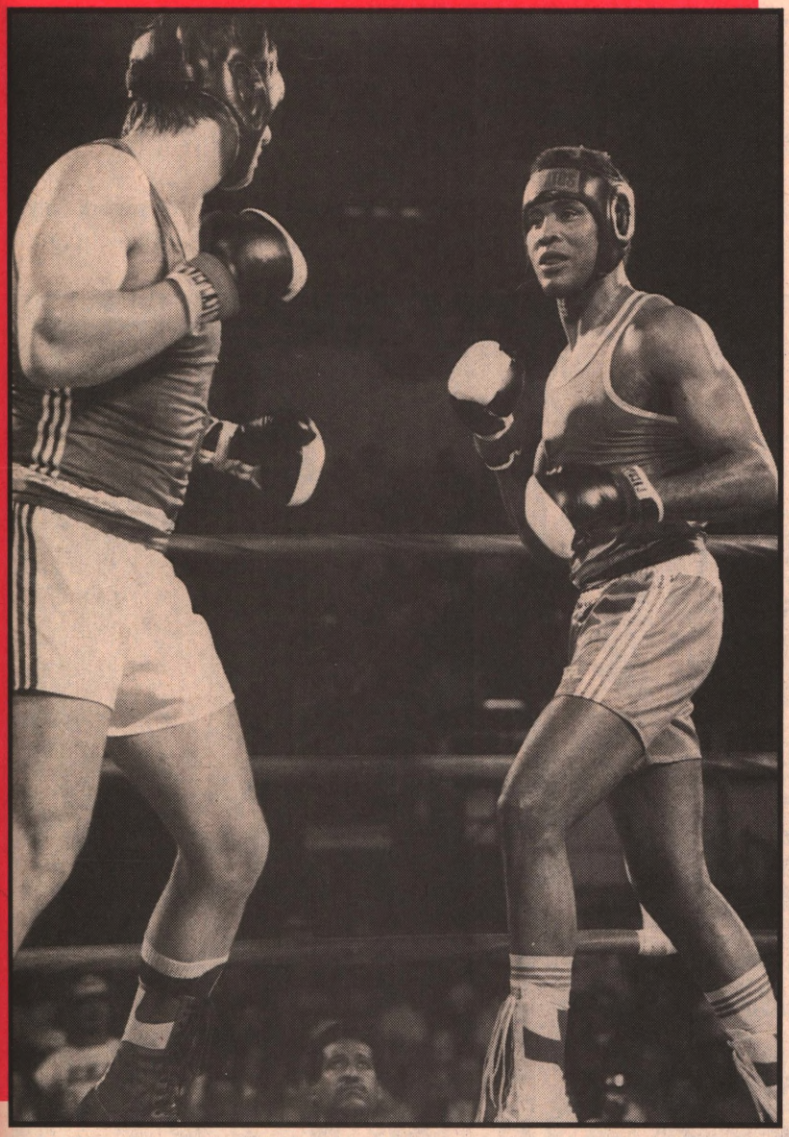
In the championship rounds, Dauthuille, a strong right-hand puncher, repeatedly staggered LaMotta. Or was "The Raging Bull" playing possum? Whatever the case, after 14 rounds, the challenger led by point totals of 72-68, 74-66, and 73-67. Each and every one of the 11,424 fans in attendance was sure the title was going to change hands.

Leaving virtually no margin for error—or for his opponent's valor—LaMotta waited until the last 30 seconds of the last round before exploding. "When he dropped his hands in my corner, I knew I had him," he said.

The timing of his furious flurry shocked the challenger, and Dauthuille was rendered helpless. LaMotta drove his opponent to the ropes, then downed him with a tremendous right to the jaw. Dauthuille did well to rise to one knee. "I thought I had him for sure, but I guess I got a little bit careless," he said in a tearful dressing room.

LaMotta had saved the title in the most dramatic way imaginable. He had also saved his date with Sugar Ray. Wonder if he knew there was a limit to one miracle per career?

BEST OLYMPIAN
Teofilo Stevenson



Unlike that legendary right-hand power, which was as much a gift as a sprinter's speed or a shortstop's reflexes, the persona developed over the years. When he burst onto the international stage in the early-'70s, Cuba's Teo Stevenson, full of humility, believed in boxing and Castro, though not necessarily in that order. But as the world's best heavyweights began to fall at his feet, he sensed his destiny. And by the time he had established himself as the monster of amateur boxing, Stevenson was as likely to defeat an opponent with his presence as his punch.

Like Stevenson, Hungary's Laszlo Papp was a three-time Olympic gold medalist. But neither Papp nor any other amateur champion ever squeezed the breath out of a division the way Stevenson did. It got to a point where the rest of the field became accustomed to fighting for silver. Predictably, the rumors of a professional career began to circulate: Stevenson was going to defect for $2-million; Stevenson was going to fight for the title in his pro debut; Stevenson was going to box a series of Bob Arum-promoted three-round exhibitions with world champion Muhammad Ali. But Stevenson remained loyal to Castro and his Caribbean brand of Communism. In fact, he was viewed as the ideal symbol, and at major international competitions, it was often the 6'5", 215-pound heavyweight who was selected as flag-bearer.

"Why do I need a million dollars when I am already a hero to eight million of my people in Cuba?" he asked.

Stevenson, who began boxing in 1966, was 20 when he began his Olympic run. Much of his success came at the expense of Americans, who fell like dominoes when he landed his right cross. At the 1972 Games in Munich, he avenged a previous loss to Duane Bobick by scoring a third-round kayo. In 1976, he scored four stoppages in Montreal, including a first-round demolition of John Tate. In 1980, James Broad was spared when the U.S. boycotted the Games of Moscow. Undeterred, Stevenson cruised through four bouts and joined Papp as the only three-time gold medalist in history. He didn't compete in '84 because of a Cuban boycott. The gold medal winner in Los Angeles turned out to be Tyrell Biggs. He was good, but also lucky; two years earlier, Biggs had suffered broken ribs in a humiliating loss to a supposedly fading Stevenson.

We'll never know, of course, how Stevenson would have done against the best professionals. Maybe it's better that way because 14 years after his final Olympic triumph, his legend continues to grow.

BEST MATCHMAKER
Teddy Brenner

If boxing is The Sweet Science, matchmaking is an art form. A matchmaker has to *visualize* his fights. There are so many variables: Will the fighters be competitive? Will their styles mesh? What will a win or a loss do to a fighter's future? When Teddy Brenner considered a match, however, he kept it simple by asking himself one question: Is this a fight *I'd* want to see? Brenner thought like a fan, and as a result, the fans benefited.

Brenner made matches for more than 40 years, and until 1988, but it was his 20-year stint at Madison Square Garden that secured him a place in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. (He was inducted in 1993.) Says Top Rank matchmaker Bruce Trampler, one of Brenner's proteges, "there's no number two or number three."

"In those days," said Brenner, recalling the years when the Garden was boxing's Mecca, "you had to be a main-eventer in another town to even be considered for a fight at the Garden."

Responsible for some of the most memorable fights in history, Brenner worked with managers, but never for them. He didn't protect fighters, and dozens of prospects who sought the Garden spotlight ended up wishing they had never climbed into the world's most famous ring.

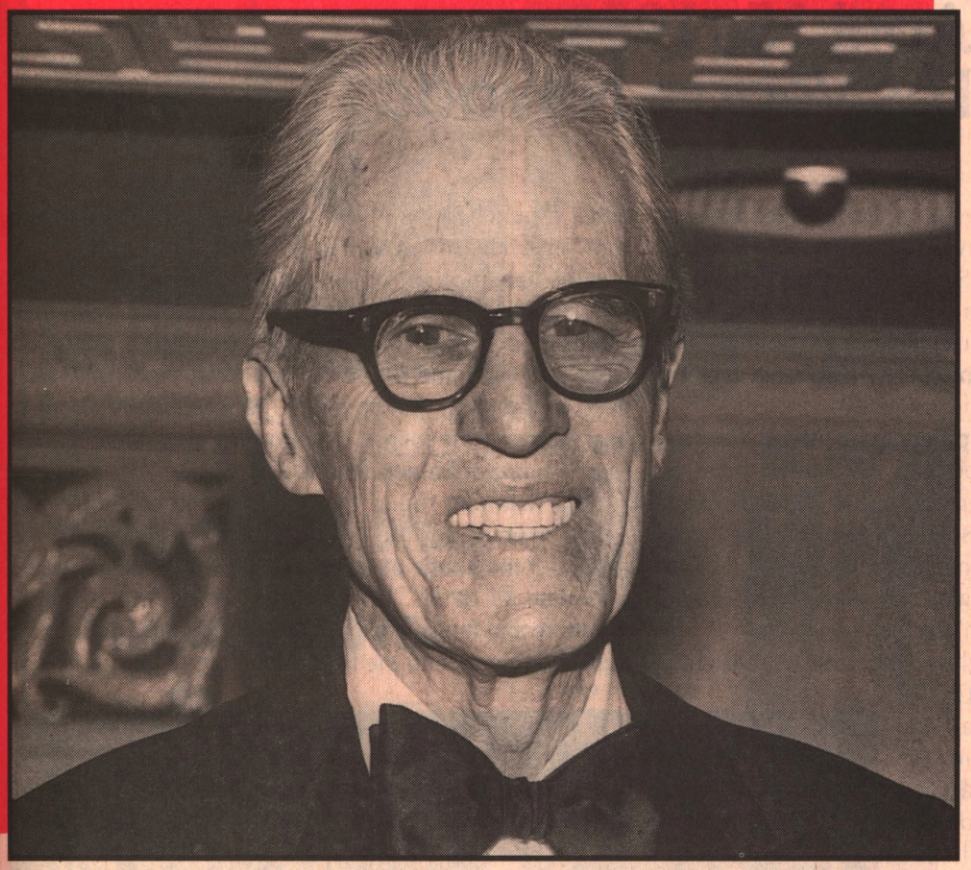
"The first fighter I ever had was 32-0 before I could get him a fight at the Garden," said Cha Cha Ciarcia. "A four-rounder. And they got him beat."

Indeed, Brenner got an unbeaten hotshot and Olympic gold medalist named Floyd Patterson beaten by Joey Maxim. He gave the long-ignored Bob Foster a shot at light heavyweight champion Dick Tiger. He helped develop Rocky Graziano and Emile Griffith. He brought Alexis Arguello to the Big Building. And in 1982, he told promoter Bob Arum that Roberto Duran, a loser in two of his last three bouts and reduced to a walkout bout in Miami, still had a future. Less than a year later, Duran was again a world champion.

But perhaps the best example of Brenner's work came during the development of a valuable heavyweight property named Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali). Before winning the world title, Clay fought 19 times. Three of those bouts were at the Garden. In the first one, Clay got dropped by Sonny Banks. In the third, he barely outpointed Doug Jones. Thanks to Brenner, Clay almost never made it to Sonny Liston.

Brenner, whose judgment of talent was unmatched, sensed Clay could fight. And that meant he was going to *have to* fight. When the best was the boss, the tomato cans stayed on the shelf.

BEST ANNOUNCER
Don Dunphy



Great careers are made in the damndest of ways. In May 1941, Don Dunphy, whose career as a blow-by-blow announcer had been limited to a few clubshows on local New York radio, was auditioning with 20 other applicants for a position with the Mutual network. Dunphy got the job because the competition kept missing punches while tripping over the fighters' last names. Dunphy, on the other hand, referred to light heavyweight champion Anton Christoforidis and Gus Lesnevich as Tony and Gus.

One month later, Dunphy was ringside at the Polo Grounds, calling Louis-Conn I for all the nation to hear. The day before the fight, Alton Cook, a radio columnist for the New York *World-Telegram*, wrote, "Dunphy will either be a star or a has-been." Dunphy later said he was too busy to be nervous. So perfect was his call that in *Voices Of Sport*, Maury Allen wrote he and his father, hunched over the radio, had "*seen* a good fight."

Dunphy, who is 82 (that's our educated guess; he doesn't like to reveal his age), hasn't called a fight since Leonard-Hearns I in 1981. Nonetheless, he'll forever be known as "The Voice Of Boxing." His reputation is hard-earned. He called thousands of fights, flawlessly made the transition from radio to television (and back), and set the standard for the talking heads of the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Maybe Dunphy wasn't the one who screamed, "Down goes Fray-zuh!" That's okay. Had he called the fight, he probably would have offered a different description. The fight was on television, you see, and if the picture told you Joe Frazier was down, there wasn't a need for the announcer to do the same.

"I don't think some of these fellows work at being a good boxing announcer," Dunphy told *KO Magazine* in 1990. "I can tell by listening to them that they don't do anything about getting better from week to week."

Dunphy worked at his craft assiduously. When he was on radio, he practiced his speed-talking. Like a fighter, he trained to go three hard minutes without having to catch his breath. When he switched to TV, he intruded only to evaluate the effect of a punch and offer analysis. Too bad most of today's blow-by-blow announcers, who subscribe to the belief that dead air is deadly, don't try the same approach.

All his technical skills and that distinctive voice aside, Dunphy simply loved to call the fights. And America loved to listen.

BEST ROUND

Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns,

Round 1
April 15, 1985
Las Vegas, Nevada

Neither Marvin Hagler nor Thomas Hearns was smashed to the canvas, and the round didn't bring an end to 1985's Fight of the Year. But if you saw it, if you rose from your seat at the first flurry and screamed out loud because you couldn't believe the ferocity and the violence, you know there's never been three minutes like it.

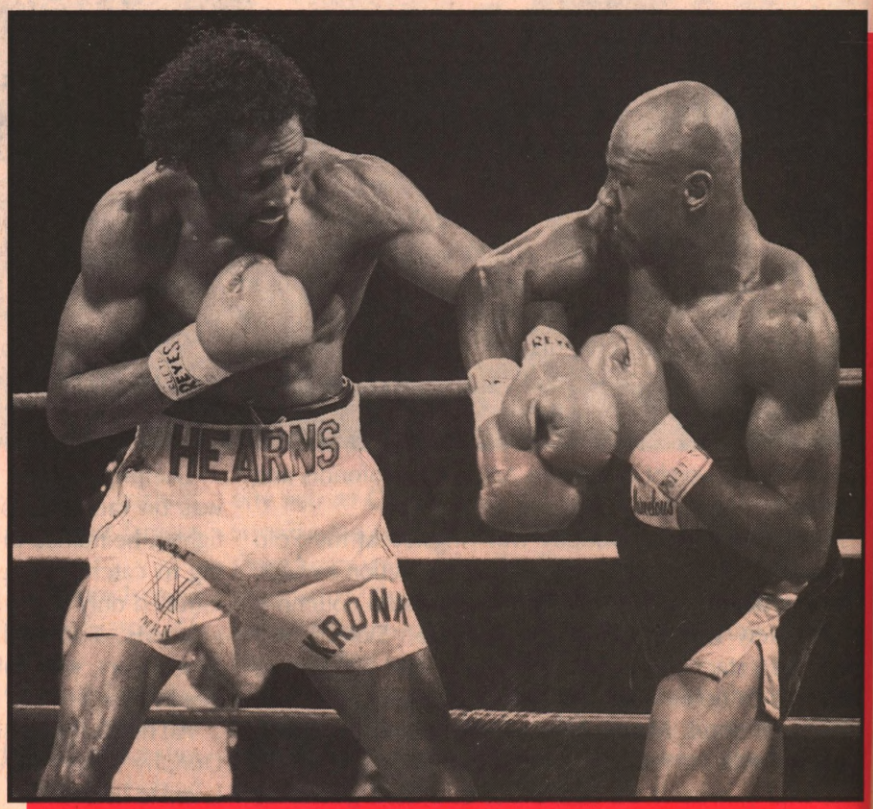
Defending the world middleweight title at Caesars Palace, Hagler was facing perhaps the hardest hitter in boxing, a right-hand puncher who had knocked Roberto Duran unconscious with a single blow. But that didn't discourage him from planning a kamikaze attack. "This guy isn't even a middleweight," he said of 154-pound champion Hearns. "'Hit Man' my ass."

At the opening bell, Hagler rushed toward the challenger and moved him to the ropes. Hearns responded by punching to the body. Within seconds, the rivals were exchanging power shots at an unprecedented pace. At 6'1", Hearns had hoped to feature lateral movement and capitalize on his four-inch reach advantage. Hagler's intensity, however, instantly eliminated the opportunity for finesse. "I started slugging because I had to," Hearns explained afterward.

Boxing does not generally lend itself to statistics, but consider that of the 82 punches delivered by Hagler, not one was a jab. For his part, Hearns, who threw 83 punches, countered with his mightiest one-twos. But his straight rights might as well have been mosquito bites. "On this night of nights," wrote Leigh Montville in the *Boston Globe*, "[Hagler] could have walked through firestorms."

Halfway through the round, either a punch or an elbow opened a cut over Hagler's right eye. Hearns now had a target, and, incredibly, Hagler had motivation to further accelerate. By the round's end, a cut-induced TKO seemed Hearns' only chance for victory. He returned to his corner on unsteady legs, and while he had done no worse than even in the three-minute battle, he was clearly about to lose the war. "He fought 12 rounds in one," said The Hit Man's manager/trainer, Emanuel Steward.

After winning round two, Hagler, the cut above his eye worsening by the minute, stopped Hearns in the third. But the image of that sensational first round would dominate all others. Wrote *Newsweek's* Pete Axthelm, "Fighters and fans alike were left emotionally drained ... [and] both men, and the fight game, are richer for it."



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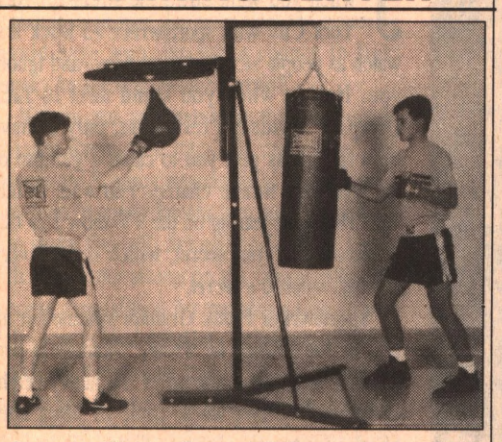

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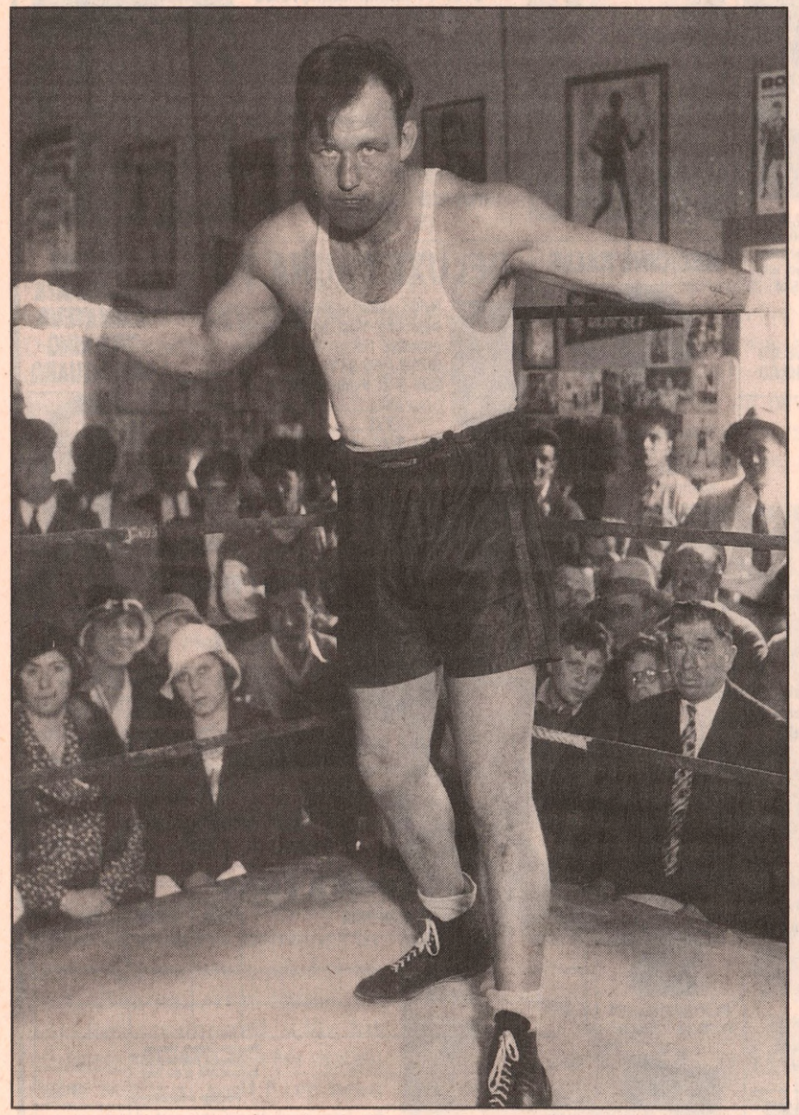


By Roger Mooney

"It's hell to be forgotten. It's nice to be remembered."

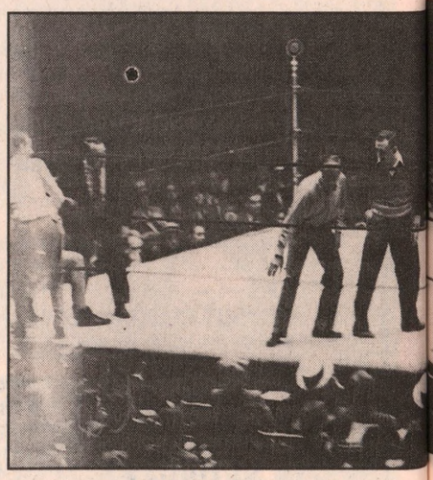
–Former heavyweight champion
Jack Sharkey

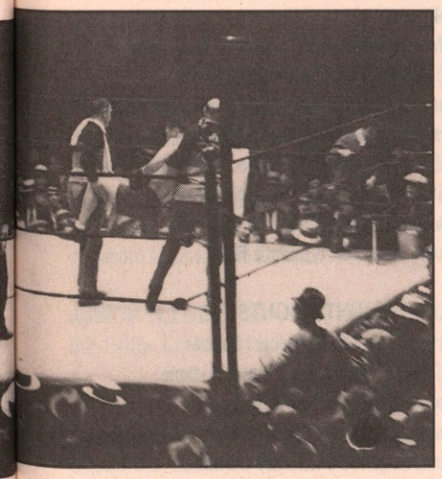
Jack Sharkey knew all about hell. Hell is when you walk down the streets of New York City with sportswriter Al Buck and watch as people stop and greet him—and ignore you. Hell is when you stand next to Jack Dempsey, inside his restaurant, only to have fight fans press past you to catch a glimpse of the legendary former champ. You want to talk hell? Hell is appearing on the TV show *I've Got A Secret*, and your secret, which is your very identity, *remains a secret.*

Sportswriter Frank Graham summed it up best in 1955, when he wrote, "Sharkey is perhaps the least-remembered of the heavyweight champions." Those words came 23 years after Sharkey wore the crown. Today, Graham's observation still holds true. On August 18, newspapers around the country ran a small brief under the header "Sharkey, Oldest Living Heavyweight Champ, Dies." How many readers knew it was *Jack* Sharkey? How many had even heard of Jack Sharkey?

Louis, Dempsey, Marciano, Ali, Tunney, Sullivan, Corbett, Patterson. Where does Sharkey's name fit in? Right smack between Max Schmeling and Primo Carnera. Only the most knowledgeable of fight fans can pinpoint Sharkey's reign. It wasn't long, lasting only one year, one week, and one day, and it wasn't terribly exciting.

Heavyweight history was made in June 1930, when Max Schmeling won the vacant heavyweight title after Sharkey allegedly hit him low. In an ironic twist, Sharkey won the rematch via highly questionable decision.





In fact, if Sharkey is remembered for anything, it's his losing. He lost a fight to Dempsey he should have won. He lost a fight to Schmeling he should have won. He lost a fight to Carnera he should have won. He lost a chance to fight Tunney for the title. Notice a trend?

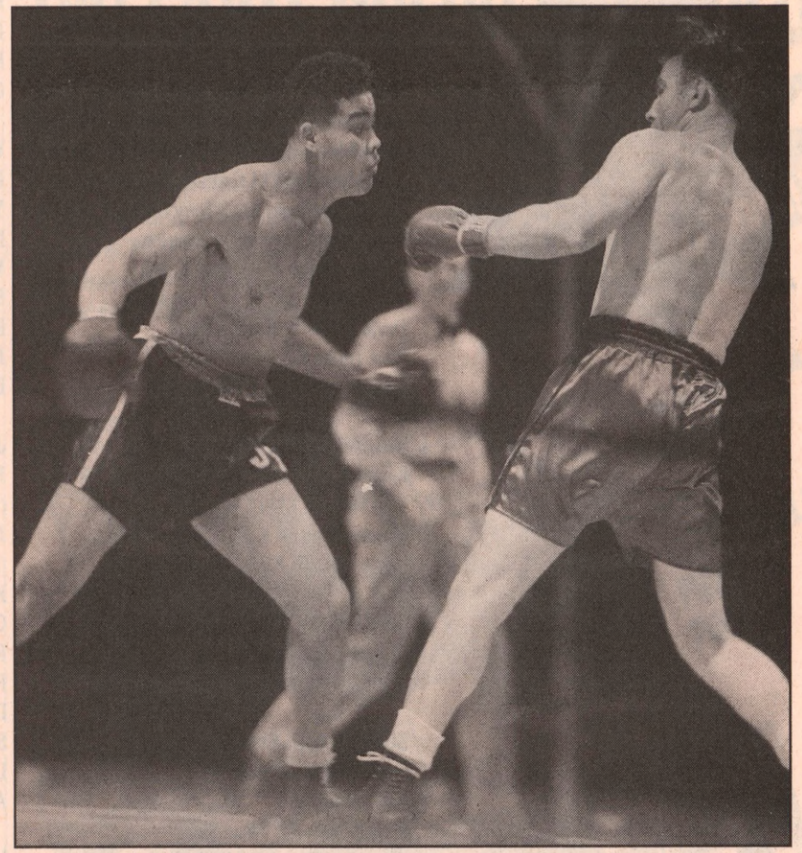
If there was controversy in the heavyweight division during the late-'20s and early-'30s, chances are Sharkey was involved. Sharkey cries foul, then Dempsey knocks him out. Fair or foul? You make the call. Schmeling-Sharkey I ends with the former sitting on the canvas while the latter is disqualified for punching low. Was it really low? Good question. Schmeling-Sharkey II ends amid boos and jeers as Sharkey is handed the title and Schmeling's manager cries "we wuz robbed!" for all the world to hear. Carnera drops Sharkey in the sixth round of their title fight. Did Sharkey throw the bout? More than one observer thought so.

For the better part of his 13-year career, which spanned 1924 to 1936, Sharkey battled more than his opponents. The press and fans were not in his corner. He had a reputation as a dirty fighter, though he lost just once on a foul. He acknowledged he'd rather spend time with his family or his fishing pole than in the ring or the gym, and his best attacks usually came from his mouth. The line was that while Sharkey talked a good game, he didn't fight one.

"When he fought, you didn't sit on the edge of your seat looking for the imminent knockout," said boxing historian Hank Kaplan. "He wasn't a very exciting fighter. A cautious guy who liked to box. The guys who remain popular are the guys who provided the thunder."

Had he knocked out Dempsey when he had the chance, or had he held the title a bit longer, maybe the people would have said, "Look, there's Al Buck walking with Jack Sharkey." Or maybe Dempsey's restaurant would have grown quiet upon Sharkey's entrance. Or maybe *I've*

(Continued on page 77)



After Sharkey found he was no match for Joe Louis (above), he tended to his wounds (below) and announced his retirement. The New Englander was among the most enigmatic of heavyweight champions.

"The Least-Remembered Heavyweight Champion"

Summary

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Riddick Bowe No-Contest 4 Buster Mathis Jr.
Larry Holmes W 10 Jesse Ferguson
Tim Witherspoon KO 3 Sherman Griffin
Corrie Sanders KO 1 Carlos DeLeon
Adilson Rodrigues KO 2 Terry Davis
Dan Dancuta KO 4 Mike Robinson
Shannon Briggs KO 8 Mark Young
Andrew Golota KO 2 Jeff Lampkin
David Tua W 10 Everton Davis
West Turner KO 8 Joe Thomas
Trevor Berbick KO 4 Paul Phillips

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Kenny Keene KO 10 Vincent Boulware
John McClain KO 1 Chemak Saleta
Marcelo Figeuroa KO 1 Eduardo Carranza
Lenny LaPaglia KO 3 Rick Enis

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Fabrice Tiozzo KO 5 Tim St. Clair
Eric Nicoletta W 8 Kalin Stoyanov

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Frank Liles W 12 Steve Little
(Wins WBA Title)
Chris Eubank KO 7 Sam Storey
Darrin Van Horn KO 2 Willie Ball
Frederic Seillier W 8 Melvin Wynn
Sugarboy Malinga KO 5 Ray Akwei
Hunter Clay Tech. Dec. 9 Lou Gent
Gary Payne W Disq. 4 Fabian Williams

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Jorge Castro W 12 Reggie Johnson
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Quincy Taylor KO 8 Derrick Rolon
Dana Rosenblatt W 10 Jacques LeBlanc
Raul Marquez KO 1 Alex Rios
Lonnie Bradley W 12 Ron Morgan
Rodney Toney KO 2 Bazante Blanco
Tim Dendy W 10 Tim Cooper

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Julio Cesar Vasquez W 12 Winky Wright
(Retains WBA Title)
Lonny Beasley D 10 Tony Marshall
Ahmet Dottuev KO 5 Sergei Schupligin
Keith Holmes KO 3 Daryll Lattimore
Emmitt Linton KO 4 Scotty Smith
Eric Holland W 10 James Hughes
Curtis Mombelly KO 1 Steve Manfredo

WELTERWEIGHTS
Buddy McGirt W 10 Patrick Coleman
Yori Boy Campas KO 9 Anthony Ivory
Derrell Coley KO 3 Horace Watterson
Manning Galloway KO 6 Anthony Jones
Shibata Flores KO 8 Jesus Cardenas
Rene Herrera W 10 Genaro Leon
John Armijo KO 1 Rene Arredondo
Edwin Murillo Tech. Draw 8 Efrem Calamati

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Jake Rodriguez KO 9 George Scott
(Retains IBF Title)
Juan Coggi KO 3 Mario Morales
(Non-Title Bout)
Kostya Tszyu KO 4 Pedro Sanchez
Charles Murray W 10 Lyndon Walker
Ross Hale KO 7 Hugh Forde
Hector Lopez KO 5 Fernando Rodriguez
Darryll Tyson KO 5 Genaro Andujar
Sammy Fuentes KO 1 Gilberto Flores
Leonardo Mas KO 8 Lupe Pintor
Alexis Arguello W 10 Jorge Palomares

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Miguel Angel Gonzalez KO 8 Leavander Johnson
(Retains WBC Title)
Shane Mosley KO 9 Mauro Gutierrez
Juan Carlos Rodriguez KO 5 Ramon Marchena
Ivan Robinson KO 1 Kevin Marston
Johnny Montantasz KO 6 Benji Marquez
Ditau Molefyane KO 7 Joseph Murray
Philip Holiday KO 5 Danny Myburgh
Bones Adams W 6 Simmie Black

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Arturo Gatti KO 10 Richard Salazar
Ed Hopson Tech. Win 9 Angel Aldama
Tony Pep KO 1 J.T. Williams
Fernando Rodriguez KO 3 James Ayers
Louie Leija KO 1 Eduardo Castillo

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Alejandro Gonzalez W 12 Cesar Soto

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FEATHERWEIGHTS
Alejandro Gonzalez W 12 Cesar Soto

Pancho Segura KO 5 Cesar Decena
Duke McKenzie KO 3 Mark Hargreaves
Arnulfo Castillo KO 5 Francisco Valdez
John Lowey KO 7 Albert Rendon
Frank Toledo KO 6 Felix Marti
Javier Leon KO 6 Javier Pichardo
Freddy Cruz D 8 Moussa Sangare
Louie Espinoza W 10 Jeff Trimble

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Hector Acero-Sanchez W 12 Tracy Patterson
(Wins WBC Title)
Vuyani Bungu W 12 Kennedy McKinney
(Wins IBF Title)
Daniel Zaragoza KO 4 Nino Ruiz
Rafael Del Valle KO 1 Miguel Ochoa
Paulie Ayala W 10 Julian Flores

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Yasuei Yakushiji KO 11 Jung Il Byun
(Retains WBC Title)
Marco Antonio Barrera KO 8 Israel Gonzalez
Naseem Hamed KO 3 Antonio Picardi
Sergio Reyes W 10 Juan Francisco Soto
Greg Richardson W 12 Armando Castro
Cuauhtemoc Gomez W 10 Juan Mendoza

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Harold Grey W 12 Julio Borboa
(Wins IBF Title)
Hiroshi Kawashima W 12 Carlos Salazar
(Retains WBC Title)
Otilio Gallegos W 12 Pepillo Valdez

FLYWEIGHTS

Yuri Arbachakov KO 8 Hugo Soto
(Retains WBC Title)
Danny Romero KO 1 Facundo Rodriguez
Luigi Camputaro W 12 Daren Fifield
Alejandro Montiel KO 10 Marcos Pacheco

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Eric Griffin KO 9 Javier Juarez

STRAWWEIGHTS

Ratanapol Sow Vorapin KO 4 Marcelino Bolivar
(Retains IBF Title)
Alex Sanchez KO 1 Carlos Juan Rodriguez
Osvaldo Guerrero KO 7 Manny Melchor

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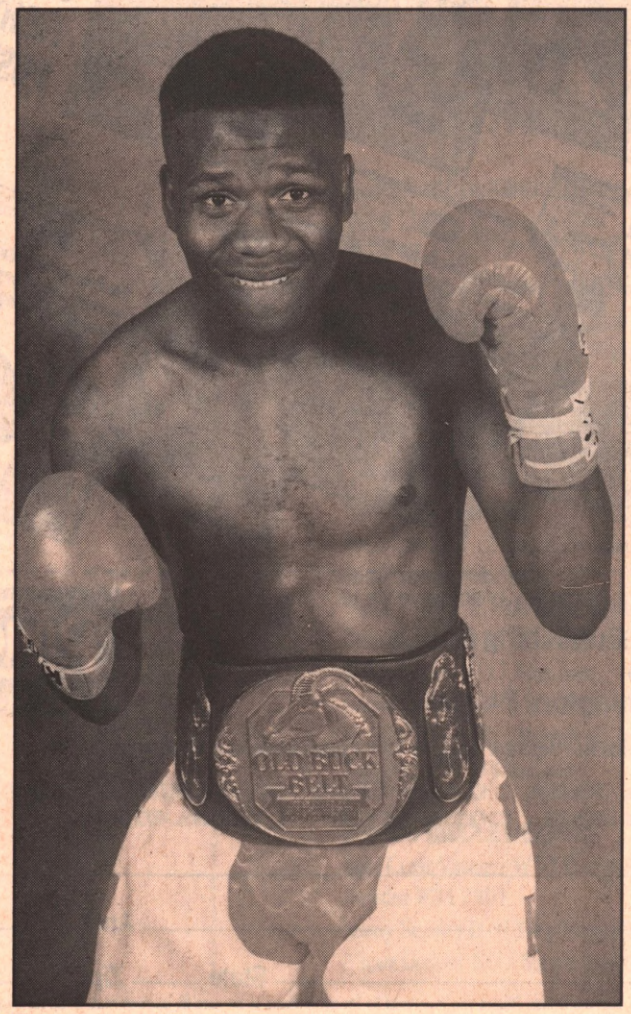
FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Only a few months ago, South Africa's Vuyani Bungu was an unknown junior featherweight who relied on the undercards of his world-class stablemate, Welcome Ncita, for work. Now he's a world champion, and one of the most unlikely winners in The Year of the Upset.

Bungu, a short, muscular 122-pounder, earned his title the hard way, outworking one of boxing's best fighters, Kennedy McKinney, over 12 lively rounds. Bungu's handlers would have preferred a try at WBC champion Tracy Patterson, who was upset six days after Bungu-McKinney. But when the McKinney fight materialized, they followed an age-old rule: You never turn down a title fight.



The junior featherweight division has been turned upside down. Go figure: Ncita, Patterson, and McKinney are former world champions, and Bungu, previously known only to hard-core fans in his native land, reigns supreme.

• • • •

Vuyani Bungu

Jorge Castro W 12 Reggie Johnson

Tucuman, Argentina: Local favorite Castro rallied over the last two rounds and captured a controversial split decision over southpaw and former titlist Johnson to win the vacant WBA middleweight title before some 7,000 fans at Club Defensores de Villa Lujan.

In May, the WBA stripped John David Jackson, who had won the crown by outpointing Johnson, for engaging in a non-title fight without its knowledge. In an effort to have Jackson reinstated, Garden State Boxing, the middleweight's promoter, went to court. On the day of Castro-Johnson, a federal judge in New Jersey ruled in favor of Jackson. Nonetheless, the WBA continued to sanction Castro-Johnson as a bout for the vacant title.

Given the various last-minute legal proceeding, the bout was anticlimactic. Over the first 10 rounds, Castro, 160, Argentina, chased and Johnson, 160, Houston, Texas, danced and jabbed. In the 11th and 12th, Castro, 94-4-2 (64), broke through and hammered Johnson, 35-4-1 (21), from a variety of angles.

Jose Laurino (Uruguay) scored 116-115 for Johnson, but was outvoted by Waldemar Schmidt (Puerto Rico) and Luis Castellanos (Colombia), who both favored Castro by 116-114. Predictably, Johnson's camp protested the decision.

The referee was Armand Krief (France).

Promoters: Don King, Osvaldo Rivera

(8-12-94)

Carlos Irusta

Frank Liles W 12 Steve Little

Tucuman, Argentina: Boxing on the Castro-Johnson undercard, the top-rated Liles easily outboxed the shorter Little and captured the WBA super middleweight title by unanimous decision. It was Little's first defense.

In one of the dullest title fights ever seen in Argentina, Liles, 166, North Hollywood, California, scored with jabs and occasional rights and rarely got hit in return. Little, 168, Reading, Pennsylvania, had extreme difficulty dealing with his opponent's height and movement, and the fans booed from start to finish.

Liles improved to 24-1 (16). His lone loss came at the hands of Tim Littles. Little dropped to 21-14-2 (5).

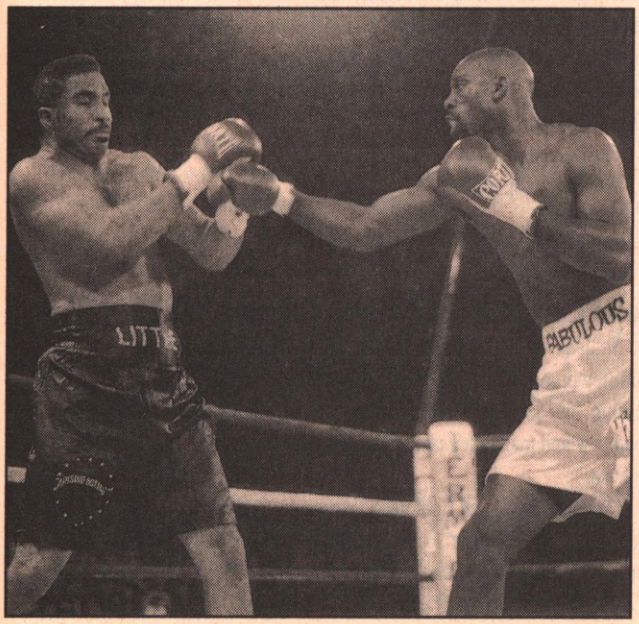


Photo courtesy of Carlos Irusta

Liles beats Little by miles

Oscar Seleme (Argentina) scored 116-114, Guillermo Perez (Panama) 118-114, and Milton Mercado (Colombia) 118-113.

The referee was Steve Smoger (USA).

Promoters: Don King, Osvaldo Rivera

(8-12-94)

Carlos Irusta

Yuri Arbachakov KO 8 Hugo Soto

Tokyo, Japan: Russian import Arbachakov pressed the action and finally caught South American champion and top-rated contender Soto, stopping him with a body shot at 3:06 of round eight to retain the WBC flyweight title before some 10,000 fans at Ariake Coliseum. The outstanding performance was the Japan-based titlist's fifth defense.

The 27-year-old Arbachakov, 112, took the first three rounds by a slight margin. Soto, 112, Argentina, featured clever movement, but also delivered plenty of punches, including several overhand rights in round four. Arbachakov, 19-0 (15), rebounded in the fifth and sixth, but Soto, 38-2-2 (25) with 2 no-decisions, forced the champion to retreat by landing some big rights in the seventh. The pace was sizzling and the punching crisp.

Had the bout gone the distance, Arbachakov's title might have been in jeopardy. But that wasn't a consideration when, late in the eighth, he drilled Soto with a hook to the face and followed with a hook to the midsection. Soto, 27, collapsed in agony and failed to beat the count of referee Alfred Asaro (France).

After seven rounds, both Gus Mercurio (Australia) and David Chung (South Korea) had Arbachakov ahead by 68-65. Rudy Jordan (USA) favored Soto by 68-66.

Promoter: Kyoei Promotions

(8-1-94)

Joe Koizumi

Hiroshi Kawashima W 12 Carlos Salazar

Tokyo, Japan: Fast-handed Kawashima pounded out a unanimous decision over fellow southpaw and mandatory challenger Salazar to retain the WBC super flyweight title before approximately 10,000 fans at Ariake Coliseum. It was the champion's first defense.

The 24-year-old Kawashima, 115, Japan, started quickly, scoring with jabs and one-twos. Salazar, 115, Argentina, connected with roundhouse lefts in the fourth and fifth, prompting Kawashima to trade. There were several exchanges from the sixth through the eighth, with the taller champion landing solid body shots and looping rights. The durable Salazar, 29, made one last stand in the ninth, backing up Kawashima with desperate combinations. Kawashima, 15-2-1 (12), opened up in the 10th, forcing Salazar, 34-6-1 (13), to repeatedly clinch. Moreover, the Argentine was penalized a point by referee Vince Delgado (USA) for hitting on the break.

Both fighters were exhausted by the 12th, which the game Salazar carried by a slim margin. It wasn't enough, as Laurence Cole (USA) scored 118-110, Herbert Minn (USA) 115-113, and Gelasio Perez (Mexico) 117-113.

Kawashima won the title by outpointing Jose Luis Bueno in May. Salazar qualified for his title try despite having lost an official eliminator to undefeated Mexican sensation Marco Antonio Barrera. When Barrera failed to make the 115-pound limit, Salazar was automatically promoted into the WBC's number-one slot.

Promoters: Kyokuto Promotions; Yonekura Promotions

(8-7-94)

Joe Koizumi

Yasuei Yakushiji KO 11 Jung Il Byun

Nagoya, Japan: Tall powerpuncher Yakushiji sent former titlist Byun to the deck no less than five times en route to a stoppage victory at the 52-second mark of round 11 before roughly 7,000 fans at Aichi Prefectural Gymnasium. It was Yakushiji's second defense.

The 5'8" Yakushiji, 117½, Japan, who had dethroned Byun via controversial decision in December, opened strongly, dropping the southpaw challenger, 118, South Korea, with a hook-straight right combination in the closing seconds of round one. Byun fell again in the third, courtesy of another long right. The 25-year-old Korean switched to an orthodox stance in the fifth and, through round seven, enjoyed considerable success by pinning Yakushiji, 22-2-1 (16), to the ropes. After being rocked in the eighth, Byun, 10-2 (4), rebounded to take the ninth. He was in control in the 10th when Yakushiji caught him with a looping hook toward the end of the round. Byun went down for the third time, and his defeat seemed imminent.

After Byun crashed twice in the 11th, cornerman Jung Ho Kim surrendered, and referee Lou Filippo (USA) signaled the end. After 10 rounds, Yakushiji led on all three cards, with Marty Denkin (USA) scoring 95-92, Chuck Hassett (USA) 97-90, and Victor Cervantes (Mexico) 95-92.

It is anticipated Yakushiji, 26, will next defend against countryman and former titlist Joichiro Tatsuyoshi. The champion will likely be an underdog.

Promoters: Teiken Promotions, Matsuda Promotions

(7-31-94)

Joe Koizumi

Vuyani Bungu W 12 Kennedy McKinney

Hammanskraal, South Africa: Rated one of the best fighters, pound-for-pound, in the world, defending IBF junior featherweight champion McKinney was comprehensively and unanimously outpointed by unheralded South African Bungu before an estimated crowd of 3,000 at the Carousel Casino resort. It was McKinney's sixth defense.

In one of the finest performances by a South African in a world title fight, the superbly conditioned Bungu, 122, who is a stablemate of former champion and McKinney rival Welcome Ncita, showed the champion no respect. Fighting out of a crouch that frustrated McKinney and neutralized his jab, he took the fight to the inside, where the champion is less effective.

The first three rounds were uneventful. In the fourth, the seemingly uninspired McKinney, 122, Las Vegas, Nevada, tried to force the action, and by the sixth, he was boxing with a swollen right eye. From the seventh through the ninth, the relentless Bungu forged ahead and scored with hooks and overhead rights. Sensing the title was slipping away, McKinney, 27-1-1 (16), rallied in the 11th. But Bungu, 24-2 (17), regained control in the 12th. He was rewarded when John Stewart (USA) and Adalaide Triplett (USA) scored 116-112 and Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) 117-111.

The referee was Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa).

Bungu became South Africa's 11th world champion.

Promoters: Rodney Berman, Cedric Kushner

(8-20-94)

Ron Jackson

Hector Acero-Sanchez W 12 Tracy Patterson

Atlantic City, New Jersey: A junior featherweight unification tournament is now all but dead. Only six days after Kennedy McKinney was dethroned as IBF champion, Patterson dropped his portion of the title by split decision to unheralded Acero-Sanchez at Bally's Park Place. It was Patterson's fifth defense.

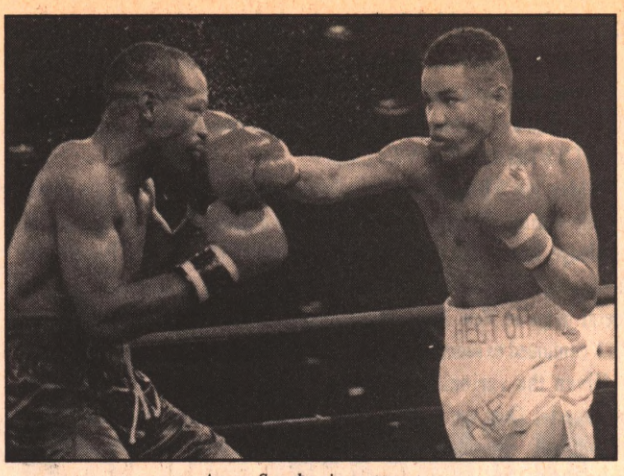


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Acero-Sanchez is on-target

Patterson, 122, Poughkeepsie, New York, faced a challenger whose only qualification seemed to be that he posed a minimal threat. A Dominican fighting out of New York City, Acero-Sanchez, 122, had impressive amateur credentials. But since relocating, he had received a gift decision over Ishmael Sanders, gotten the short end of a draw with Eddie Croft, and lost to Frank Toledo. Noticeably lacking in punching power, he seemed little more than an opponent against which Patterson could be showcased.

After a tame first round, however, Acero-Sanchez, 30-2-2 (20), dramatically demonstrated this was not just a glad-to-be-here performance. A crisp exchange opened the second, with Acero-Sanchez, fighting out of a corner, firing a hook that sent Patterson, 50-3-1 (36), to the canvas. Patterson rose quickly, then was jolted later in the round by a right.

For the rest of the tense and riveting bout, Patterson stalked and featured the heavier hands, at times driving Acero-Sanchez' head back with a right or standing him on the ropes with a combination to the body. But he had difficulty corralling the challenger for anything more than a short rally. The Dominican circled away, kept up constant movement, and scored with short punches. The threat of a second knockdown was always there, more because of Acero-Sanchez' precision than his power.

Every round was close, and the pattern prevailed through the 12th, when Patterson twice landed big rights, and Acero-Sanchez pestered him in between. The verdict could have genuinely gone either way. Hank Elespuru scored for Patterson by 115-112, but was outvoted by Cindy Bartin and Vinnie Rainone, both of whom saw Acero-Sanchez the winner by 114-113. All three judges are from the USA.

The referee was Ron Lipton (USA).

Promoter: Top Rank

(8-26-94)

J.R. Jowett

Julio Cesar Vasquez W 12 Winky Wright

St. Jean de Luc, France: Producing a tremendous effort, WBA junior middleweight champion Vasquez retained the title for the ninth time, scoring four knockdowns en route to a unanimous decision over fellow southpaw and mandatory challenger Wright at the jai alai stadium outside of Biarritz.

Claiming an injured right hand, Vasquez sought a 10-day postponement. But after a WBA doctor examined him and reported minimal damage, the promoters, Louis and Michel Acaries, insisted the bout be held on schedule.

Despite arriving in France only four days before the fight, Vasquez, 153½, Sante Fe, Argentina, fought magnificently. He floored the 22-year-

old Wright, 154, St. Petersburg, Florida, in the second and seventh, and twice in the 12th. Wright, 25-1 (18), proved valiant, rebounding time and again to initiate toe-to-toe exchanges.

"The kid was very tough," said Vasquez, 51-1 (35). "Stronger than I thought he'd be."

The champion added that had he been in 100 percent shape, he would have scored a stoppage.

Marco Antonio Torres (Panama) scored 115-110, Marcial Vargas (Venezuela) 113-110, and Ove Ovesen (Denmark) 114-110.

The referee was Enzo Montero Moran (Venezuela).

(8-21-94)

Carlos Irusta

Harold Grey W 12 Julio Cesar Borboa

Inglewood, California: In one of the best title fights seen here in years, unheralded Colombian Grey wrested the IBF junior bantamweight title from Borboa via split decision before a crowd of 4,056 at the Great Western Forum. It was Borboa's sixth defense.

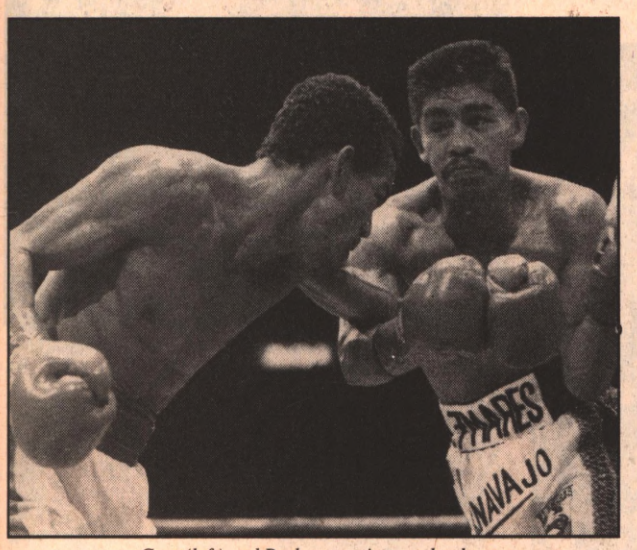


Photo by Brent Cook

Grey (left) and Borboa tear into each other

Armed with a four-inch advantage in height and a five-inch edge in reach, the 22-year-old Grey, 115, capitalized by scoring with jabs and straight rights. What was most surprising, however, was that when Borboa, 115, Guaymas, Mexico, worked his way inside, he was outfought. Gray proved both faster and more skillful.

With time running out, Borboa, 23-5 (21), desperately tried to save his title, sweeping the last two rounds on all three cards. The Mexican twice buckled Grey's knees in the final session, first with a hook to the chin, then with a right. Had Grey, 17-0 (15), gone down and lost the round by a 10-8 count, Borboa would have kept the title via split draw.

Jim Traylor and Dr. James Jen-Kin scored for Grey by 116-112 and 114-113, respectively. Fritz Werner saw a drastically different fight, favoring Borboa by 117-111. All three judges are from the USA. THE RING scored 115-113 for Grey.

The referee was Robert Byrd (USA).

The Borboa camp screamed robbery, claiming the champion had been denied two knockdowns. The first was an obvious slip. The second incident occurred in round 11, when Borboa pushed Grey to the canvas after hurting him with a series of blows. Both fighters suffered cuts opened by unintentional butts; Borboa began bleeding over his left eye in round five, and Grey was wounded over his right eye one stanza later.

Afterward, Grey, who was fighting outside of Colombia for the first time, said his left hand was the key to victory. For his part, Borboa indicated he'd like to drop down to flyweight and face either Chiquita Gonzalez or Michael Carbajal.

(8-29-94)

David Wood

Jake Rodriguez KO 9 George Scott

Bushkill, Pennsylvania: Called by some the least talented world champion in boxing, "Jake The Snake" keeps winning title fights. Defending the IBF junior welterweight title for the second time, Rodriguez turned in one of his most impressive performances, stopping fellow southpaw Scott between the ninth and 10th rounds at the Fernwood Resort Hotel.

The previously unbeaten Scott, 139½, Hollywood, Florida, via Sweden, a silver medalist at the 1988 Olympic Games, started smoothly, circling the ring and landing his right jab. Rodriguez, 140, Brentwood, New York, began to capitalize on his advantage in strength in the fifth, forcing Scott to the inside and punishing him when the challenger would back out of clinches with his hands by his sides.

Scott, 23-1 (11), seemed to be getting his second wind in the eighth when Rodriguez, 26-2-2 (7), dropped him with a short left two minutes into the round. In a show of good sportsmanship, the champion motioned to referee Tony Wolf (USA) that it had really been a slip. Nonetheless, it was ruled a knockdown. Then, in a show of *bad* sportsmanship, Rodriguez punched a dazed Scott into the ropes after the bell.

Nearly exhausted, Scott was forced to trade in the ninth. Several additional overhand lefts had him reeling across the ring and spitting blood. Before the start of the 10th, Wolf, on the advice of the ringside physician, called a halt.

The judges were Bill Flasser, John Poturaj, and Joe Pasquale, all from the USA.

"I was cautious at first because he's got that European style I wasn't used to," said Rodriguez. "But I've got that *New York* style."

It's anticipated Rodriguez' next defense will come against highly hyped mandatory challenger Kostya Tszyu, perhaps before the year is out.

Promoter: Top Rank

(8-27-94)

Mark Jacobs ■

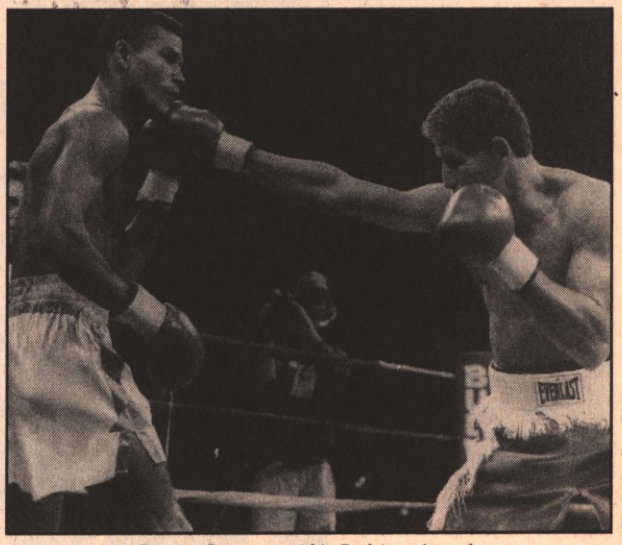


Photo by Ray Bailey

Beating Scott was within Rodriguez' reach

Camera Clicks

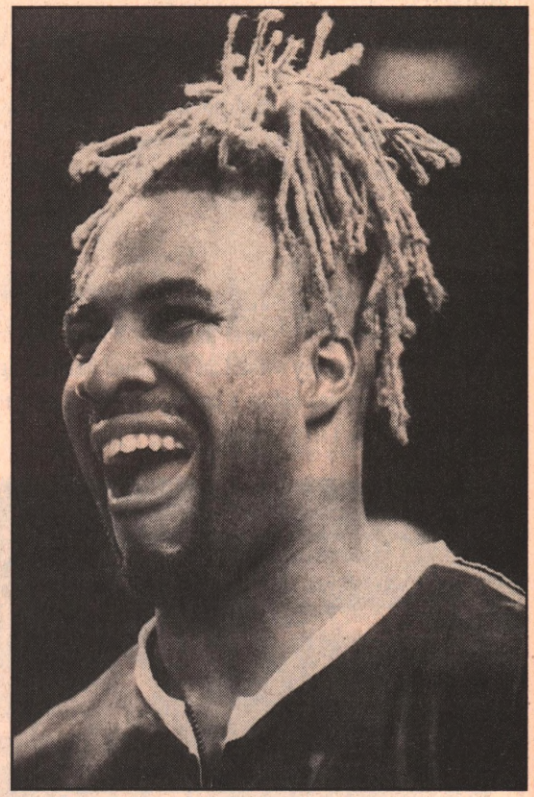


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

After missing much of 1994 because of an injury, heavyweight Shannon Briggs, 19-0, seems poised to make his move. The Brooklyn-born prospect is trained by Teddy Atlas.

Mexican sensation Marco Antonio Barrera, 32-0, continued his run to the world bantamweight title with an eighth-round kayo of Israel Gonzalez at the Great Western Forum. With Barrera, Wayne McCullough, and Naseem Hamed, the 118-pounders are stocked with super prospects.

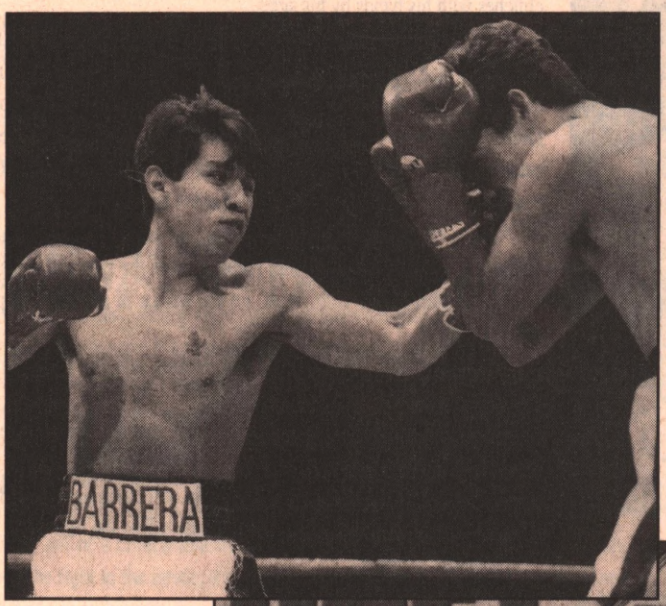


Photo by Brent Cook

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Lighten up, guys! Roy Jones and James Toney seem thrilled to be surrounded by a bevy of beauties at the New York City press conference announcing their November 18 rumble at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

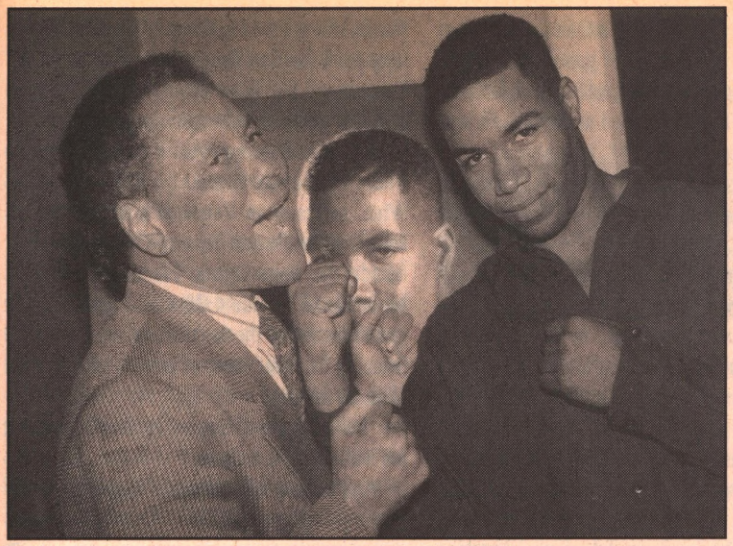


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Former light heavyweight champion Jose Torres squares off with actor Michael Jai White. HBO is making a movie about Mike Tyson's life, based on Torres' book, ***Fire And Fear: The Inside Story Of Mike Tyson.*** *White will play the former heavyweight champion.*

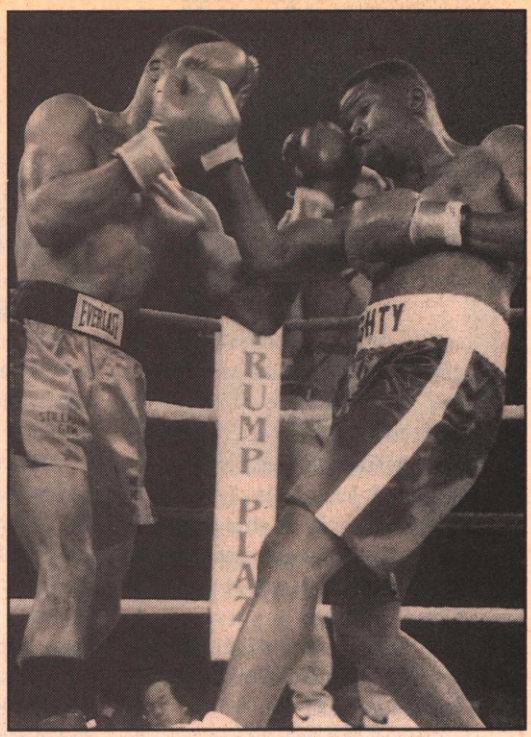


Photo by Ray Bailey

Ivan Robinson (right) exploded into the lightweight picture by kayoing Kevin Marston in one round. The Philadelphian, 14-0, is hoping to fight former amateur rival Oscar De La Hoya.

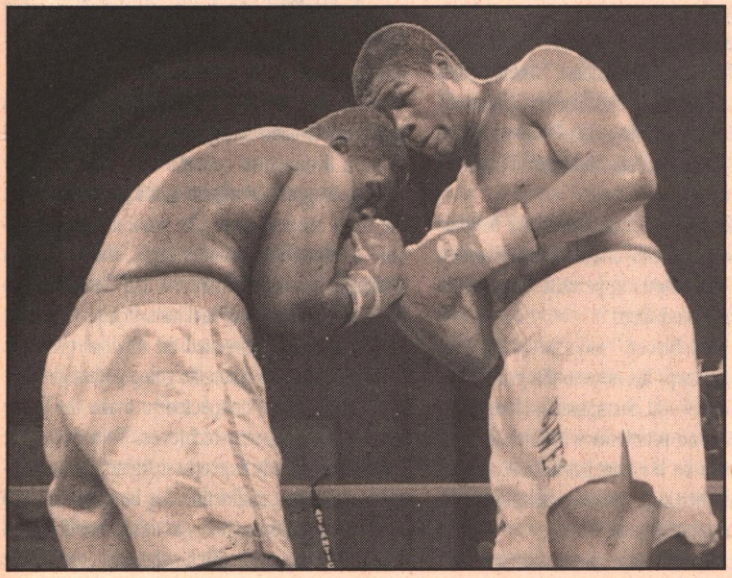


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Riddick Bowe got back in the ring after nine months of inactivity by taking on Buster Mathis Jr. in Atlantic City. The bout was ruled a no-contest when "Big Daddy" landed a punch while Mathis was down. Most observers felt Bowe should have been disqualified.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Bring back the '70s! The stud on the right is John Trav, uh, Victor Galindez. His training partner is ... Well, that's not really important, is it? This photo was taken a long time ago at a wild party in Argentina. Yes, THE RING *is everywhere.*

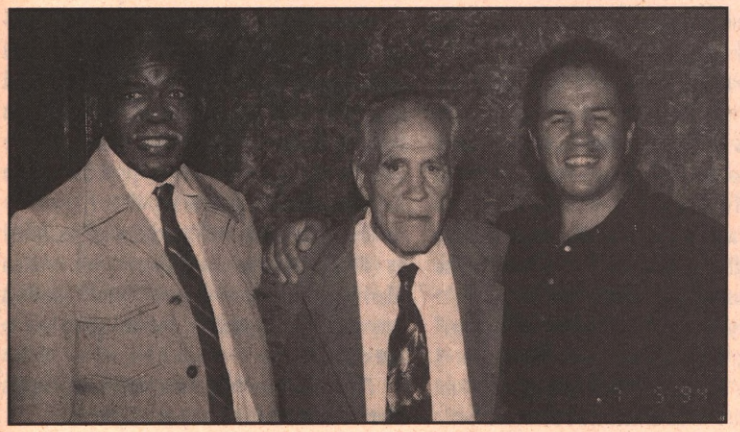


Photo by Mike Neporadny

Spotted at a boxing get-together in L.A. (from left): lightweight legend Ike Williams, ex-135-pound champion Juan Zurita, and two-division former titlist Bobby Chacon. Williams died a few days after this photo was taken.

New Faces

(Continued from page 16)

Okay, so maybe Vaden ain't Auden. But it blows away anything Frank "The Animal" Fletcher ever wrote.

***

A natural performer doesn't need to be pushed onto the stage, and Vaden wasn't pushed into the ring. As a youngster, he didn't participate in sports until his frustrated father took him to the Jackie Robinson YMCA in San Diego. ("I'm a momma's boy," he explains.) The 1976 Olympics, and specifically the stage presence of Sugar Ray Leonard, provided the motivation, and when he told his father he wanted to box, the response was, "Yeah, *right*."

Initially, the cynicism was justified; when Vaden began sparring, he'd invariably suffer a bloody nose and get scared.

"The first time was only for a minute," he recalls, "but it seemed like forever."

Slowly, Vaden grew accustomed to the rhythms of the ring. Next came comfort. Now, he says, "I have so much fun, it's one of the safest environments I can think of. It feels natural."

Vaden won a handful of junior titles before placing boxing aside so he could play high school basketball. When he returned to the ring, he was instantly successful. In 1988, he advanced to the semifinals of the Olympic Trials, losing to eventual 147-pound representative Kenny Gould. He was the U.S. amateur champion in '89 and '90, and won a bronze medal at the 1990 Goodwill Games. His overall amateur record: 327-10.

"The smartest thing I did," he says, "was take that 3½-year break [during high school]. If I hadn't, I feel I might've left my best in the amateurs."

Before turning pro, Vaden was contacted by Bob Arum, Dan Duva, and representatives of Sugar Ray Leonard. While he decided to remain free of promotional ties, he accepted the financial backing of a group of San Diego businessmen. They're still involved in his management, at least in a financial sense. More hands-on is Arnie Rosenthal, who joined Team Vaden as an adviser in January 1993. There has been less stability in his training. He's worked with Lou Lake (pro debut), Norman Parra (fights two through 10), Abel Sanchez (fights 11 through 15), 1992 Olympic coach Joe Byrd (fights 16 through 18), and Mustafa Muhammad (fight 19 through the present).

What each of the teachers has helped develop is a 6'1", 154-pound converted southpaw with a sterling jab, dangerous uppercuts with either hand, and stellar hand speed.

"He's a pure boxer," says Mustafa Muhammad. "If he keeps his nose to the grindstone, he can become a world champion. And he wants to learn, I have no problems with him. I'll get him to sit down on his punches instead of just relying on his boxing. And he *can* punch; he knocked down John Montes."

Vaden's points win over comebacking former contender Montes in March, along with his decision victory over the previously undefeated (14-0) Papillion in June, have elevated him to top-10 contender status; he's ranked fourth by the IBF and 10th by the WBC.

"There's an adage that you never turn down a title shot," says Rosenthal. "I'd be inclined to take one, as long as the preparation is proper. Paul likes as much perfection in a situation as possible. If I came up to him while he was training for a fight and said, 'So-and-so fell out; we'll be fighting Julio Cesar Vasquez for the WBA title instead,' he wouldn't take it."

"The key is to get it done before I grow," adds Vaden, who walks around at 166 pounds. "I think I can take care of everything, find out who's superior in the division, by next year."

In a perfect world, Vaden's chance will come against WBC super welterweight champion Terry Norris, who is based in Campo, California, only a long jab from San Diego. Stylewise, however, Vasquez and IBF titlist Gianfranco Rosi, who are face-first types, would be more appropriate.

Whoever the opposition turns out to be, Vaden will be sure to make his moment exciting. When he trains in Vegas, it's ironic that the leader of the Dazzle Tour of '94 doesn't even notice the neon lights. He meets Mustafa Muhammad for his 4:30 a.m. roadwork and spends the rest of the day training, writing poetry, listening to music, and, of course, planning the Ultimate Show.

"It's all like a screenplay for me," he says. "I see it all before it happens."

And be sure, something *will* happen. ■

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DEALER INQUIRES INVITED

Jones

(Continued from page 23)

this past May.

In those bouts, Jones' mastery was so pronounced—and unexpected—that he appeared to be a dimension beyond any other fighter making wages. He was so quick and potent that the bouts seemed more like workouts than hard-core competition. Interestingly, the ease with which he handled both Harris and Tate seems to have brought a critical backlash. In making it look so simple, Jones provoked the obvious question: What would he do when the going got tough?

Well, Toney is expected to make the going tough for the 25-year-old Jones. To many folks, Toney now stands as the best fighter, pound-for-pound, today, a distinction the undefeated (26-0 with 23 kayos) Jones likes to think should be his. But the Pensacola fighter, who was told by the IBF he'd have to give up the middleweight crown in order to get the shot against Toney, is eager for the test his critics insist he has not yet had.

"James Toney has talked a lot about me—saying things about me," says Jones. "That's just made me more interested in fighting him. I want to see if he can really do it to me. My attitude is: Prove it to me. Toney and everybody—they're calling my name. And I'm just like those inquiring minds—I want to know."

The Jones camp readily acknowledges Toney as Roy's toughest opponent yet. Alton Merkerson, who trains Jones, says, "Toney's a very good counterpuncher, and he knows how to bite down."

(The ability to "bite down" means having the heart to overcome adversity in a fight.)

Jones' assessment of Toney pretty much echoes Merkerson's. But, he adds, "Toney's

improved greatly. And has a lot more confidence. The major improvement is in his head movement. He protects his body very well."

Merkerson points out that as keen a counterpuncher as Toney may be, he's been aided by the fact that most opponents have stood straight in front of him.

"And I never stand in front of nobody," says Jones. "It's not that I'm not scared of anybody. It's just I wasn't taught to bang. By the same token, I'll do what I have to to win. But my instinct is not to stand there and get hit."

Yet should the fight come down to the 168-pounders deciding to war, Toney will find that Jones is no slouch as a puncher. Ask Al Cole, the IBF cruiserweight champion. While sparring with Jones in Pensacola, Cole was on the receiving end of a left hook that landed with enough impact to make him rubbery-legged and force Merkerson to stop the session. And that was with both fighters wearing 18-ounce training gloves.

"Of all the people Toney has fought," says Merkerson, "none of them hits as hard as Roy."

Just before Jones turned up in Las Vegas in July to watch the 26-year-old Toney fight Williams, Toney was asked about his November opponent.

"He's not good enough to carry my bags," Toney said.

Jones heard about it but was unfazed.

"He didn't say it to me," says Jones. "It don't mean anything 'les he says it to me."

It would be a tactical mistake for Toney to wise off to Jones, says Stanley Levin.

"The man in Roy doesn't like somebody getting in his face and mouthing off," he says. "Tate did that—kept saying Roy hadn't fought a real fighter—and paid for it. Roy became so calm before the match that it was eerie. Normally, when he comes into the ring, he comes in dancing. This fight, it was almost like the calm before the storm. He stood there just moving his feet, almost like a horse getting ready to run. Roy's mother, Carol, was sitting next to me. I turned to her and said, 'God help Thomas Tate.' Roy went out there and destroyed him in two rounds. It was like Tate was a punching bag."

Levin says that while Toney hasn't mouthed off in Jones' presence, he expects that he eventually will: "Toney's manager, Jackie Kallen, told my brother Fred that they wanted us to know James really hates Roy. He sees Roy as someone who grew up with a silver spoon."

By now, Jones is used to all the aspersions and the doubts. He's also used to the critics—and doesn't give a hoot about them.

"They can look at me how they want to," says Jones. "Critics don't fight the fight. Boxers do. This fight will be brains over brawn. I'll just use my head. Watch me: I'll do the job on James 'Lights Out' Toney." ■

Phil Berger is a freelance writer based in New York City.

Head Injuries

(Continued from page 27)

Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach were forced into retirement because of repeated concussions, such an injury seems to be the least of O'Neill's problems. "Concussions are rare," he said. "I've had a lot of players who've had their bell rung, so to speak. But it's a much lower percentage than what we deal with in terms of knees, ankles, and shoulders."

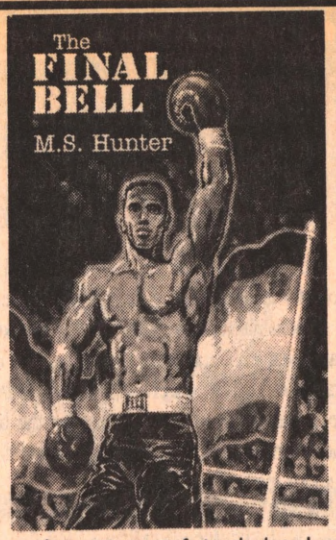
Another way boxing attempts to combat head injury is to make certain a fighter is not dehydrated when he enters the ring. "It's a medical fact that the brain shrinks when it is dehydrated," said Dr. Flip Homansky of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. "Then it has more room to bang around in the bony skull."

The IBF mandates that weigh-ins occur no less than 12 hours before a fight. The WBC has adopted the same rule. There are, however, local commissions, such as Florida, that hold weigh-ins closer to the time of the fight. Homansky argues that a fighter who struggles to make weight and enters the ring close to dehydration is placing himself in extreme danger. He suggests periodic weigh-ins leading up to the fight as a possible solution, but that would require fighters arriving at the site of the bout weeks in advance. That is not always feasible, and few in boxing have proven to be honorable enough to adhere to weight clauses while outside a commission's jurisdiction.

Boxing, of course, has always battled a negative image. In an attempt to right itself, the WBC has donated more than $700,000 to the UCLA-based SPAR [Safety and Performance Advancement Through Research] since 1980. The aim of SPAR is to study the physiological mechanism by which a knockout occurs, and what happens in the brain when a fighter gets knocked out.

First, understand what happens when someone is rendered unconscious. When a fighter gets hit on the chin, the head rotates quickly. According to Dr. Barry Jordan, medical director of the New York State Athletic Commission, that acceleration causes the brain to shift and blood vessels and fibers to tear. That causes a brief electrochemical disconnection in the brain, similar to when a phone is suddenly disconnected. The result is unconsciousness.

(Continued on page 72)



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—Steve Farhood, editor-in-chief, *The Ring*

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Head Injuries

(Continued from page 71)

Rotational acceleration (when the head shifts violently from one side to the other) is believed to be responsible for more people being knocked out than linear acceleration (when a punch is landed straight on). "It's conceivable that understanding these events can allow us to protect the brain," said Finerman, an orthopedic surgeon and director of sports medicine at UCLA.

SPAR has launched many studies, ranging from drug-testing to minimizing long-term brain damage to developing mouthpieces that will absorb more shock from a blow. The organization is now studying the level of electrolytes and neuro-excitory amino acids in the brain during different stages of concussive damage. The levels shift throughout a fight, and the hope is that if the levels can be stabilized *before* a fight, trauma is less likely to occur afterward. Another theory: When a fighter gets knocked out, he can be fed these electrolytes or amino acids intravenously to quickly restore the levels.

Another study consists of making electrical recordings of how visual and audio stimuli are transmitted through a fighter's brain. This can measure how much trauma a fighter's brain has suffered. "There might be a way to say this man has had too much trauma and he ought not to box anymore," said Dr. Finerman.

Some in the medical profession feel the study of long-term brain damage should take top priority. "Acute brain injuries where a fighter dies are rare," said Dr. Jordan. "The biggest problem boxing has right now is chronic brain injuries."

Indeed. A number of boxing's elder statesmen are battling pugilistica dementia, a high-priced euphemism for being punchdrunk. There are other neurological disorders associated with taking too many blows to the head. Boxing goodwill ambassadors such as Rocky Graziano and Joe Louis suffered in the later stages of their life from Alzheimer's disease, which is marked by progressive memory loss and mental deterioration. And Muhammad Ali, the brightest and most charismatic figure the sport has ever known, now battles Parkinson's Syndrome, a neurological disorder characterized by tremors and a shuffling gait.

A study conducted in the late-'60s of 224 former pro fighters licensed by the British Board of Boxing Control for at least three years from 1929 to 1955 revealed that 17 percent had traumatic lesions of the central nervous system attributable to boxing. The study also concluded that problems were more prevalent among fighters who had fought more than 10 years, engaged in more than 150 pro fights, or retired after age 28.

Dr. Jordan's research also revealed former fighters suffering from "full-blown pugilistica dementia" is close to 20 percent. He agreed the likeliness increased with a greater exposure to punches. Ironically, a 1988 study of 50 former amateur fighters in Sweden, which banned professional boxing in 1969, failed to show any signs of chronic brain damage.

The data would suggest that boxing is indeed a young man's game. But there is the legal issue of whether a commission can deny a boxer a license after he meets the physical requirements. "We try to steer fighters away, but we're having a heck of a time not licensing fighters," said Dr. Homansky. "You are taking away a man's livelihood."

While a mandatory retirement age has been

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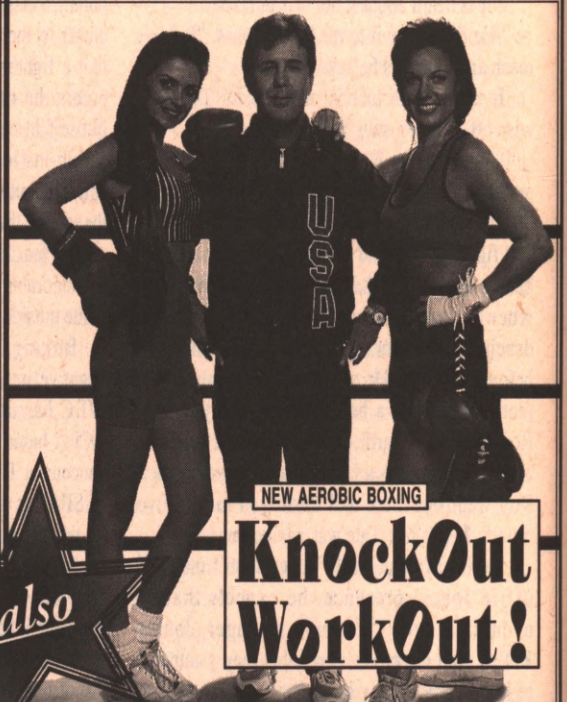

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suggested, it would be difficult to enforce. The plight of Ali and others who fought beyond their time does little to dissuade comebacking pugilists. Just as they feel impervious to the subdural hematoma, fighters rarely consider the long-term damage associated with their sport. "I think there should be an age limit," said veteran cutman Al Gavin. "Everyone says Ali shouldn't have been in the ring at the end. We all knew that, so why was he? The reflexes of a 20-year-old man is one thing. The reflexes of a 40-year-old man are another. And the reflexes of a 40-year-old man with a lot of fights is another."

And then there are the reflexes of George Foreman. When Foreman first launched his improbable comeback at age 39 in 1987, Homansky found him in excellent condition. "George was the exception to the rule," said Homansky. "He was off for a long time. He never really took any beatings. He had the retinas of a baby. But he gave others the perception that they could do it, too."

It is clear now that Foreman, who will get another shot at the heavyweight title against IBF-WBA champion Michael Moorer, has stayed on too long. But how does the game rid itself of aged pretenders without fighting a wave of lawyers? Even worse, how will boxing explain why Foreman was licensed if Moorer inflicts horrible damage upon his 46-year-old opponent? It is the kind of ammunition that fuels the AMA's movement.

"When Frankie Campbell died after Max Baer knocked him out [in 1930], Harold Barnes, who judged so many big fights, suddenly turned against boxing," recalled Kaplan. "He started an organized drive to ban boxing. That's the first real attack I can recall."

Kaplan may see another one if Foreman suffers against the power-hitting Moorer. Should that occur, it will be yet another of boxing's self-inflicted wounds. Even if Foreman proves competitive, how exposing himself to additional punches will alter his future remains to be seen. Will Gavin's words apply to him as well?: *"Everyone says George shouldn't have been in the ring at the end. We all knew that, so why was he?"*

Boxing has indeed advanced since the bare-knuckle era. But in many ways, it still hasn't come far enough. ■

Robert Cassidy is a frequent contributor to **THE RING.**

What If...

(Continued from page 29)

es, were rugged pros who dwarfed the competition faced by Conteh during his formative phase. Galindez would rebound and gain revenge against all three of his conquerors during a 23-bout undefeated run that led him to a world title shot. In one of 1974's most exciting bouts, the bull-like Argentine stopped Len Hutchins in 13 brutal rounds and lay claim to the vacant WBA version of the title.

By 1977, both Galindez and Conteh had established their dominance in an extremely competitive division, and the boxing world awaited their inevitable collision. However, in spite of the attractiveness of a unification bout, the match never took place.

By mid-'77, Conteh, due to both physical and managerial problems, had fought only four times in three years, earning the ire of the WBC because of his inactivity. In May '77, just two months after he had summarily dispatched Hutchins in three rounds via devastating left hook, the WBC stripped him of the title for pulling out of a scheduled defense against Cuello. The WBC substituted Jesse Burnett for Conteh, and Cuello promptly punched Burnett's ticket via ninth-round knockout to become the new WBC king.

Galindez, in the meantime, stayed very active, fighting four times during the year and putting his title on the line in three of the bouts. The WBA champion engaged in three 15-round wars against Richie Kates, Lopez, and Gregory. But the champion paid a toll in the form of wear and tear.

A year later, Conteh was given a chance to regain the title he'd never lost in the ring, but the Englishman dropped a 15-round decision to Mate Parlov, who'd won the WBC title by stopping Cuello five months earlier. Galindez fought a remarkable five times in five months in early-'78, including a title defense rematch against Lopez. Then, perhaps pushing his luck and underestimating his opponent, he tried to go six-for-six, only to be stopped by underdog Rossman via 13th-round TKO.

HOW IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

"He's not the most intelligent man in the world." Those words, spoken by Conteh after his March 1977 defense against Yaqui Lopez, serve as one more log on what has become a huge bonfire. Conteh is discussing the antics of rival Galindez, who, having entered the ring for an introduction prior to the Conteh-Lopez clash, made some derogatory remarks to Conteh. "Galindez came over to shake my hand," says Conteh, "and he showed exactly the lack of class that one expects from a Neanderthal. Maybe it's time to teach him some manners." When informed of Conteh's implied challenge, Galindez laughs and shakes his head. He motions

(Continued on page 74)

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What If...

(Continued from page 73)

to his interpreter and rattles off a counterattack in Spanish. "Victor says Conteh is afraid of him," comes the translation. "He says Conteh always has an excuse. That his hands hurt. That he has business problems. Victor says he'll kill him if Conteh really wants a fight." Galindez holds up four fingers, smiles, and predicts a stoppage in four rounds.

When the fight is finally made, Galindez sneers at the mention of Conteh's name and once again holds up four fingers—then slowly lowers one of them. Conteh will go in three!

THE FIGHT

Boxing pundits view the unification fight as a tossup. For all their accomplishments and considerable skills, both fighters have weaknesses. Conteh's hand problems are well-documented, and Galindez' reputation as a bleeder is well-earned.

Conteh's camp contends the undisciplined Galindez is made for a sharpshooter like the WBC champion: "Galindez only knows one way to fight. He tries to bull his way inside and blocks punches with his face. If he tries that with John, he'll have his head handed to him. You know, John Conteh can not only box, but also slug. He's probably got an edge in one-punch power over the other guy."

Galindez backers dismiss the contention that Galindez is crude and one-dimensional: "Maybe Victor can only fight one way, but he's damn good at it. Let's see if Conteh can do any harm to Galindez before Victor breaks Conteh's ribs. How much strength do you think Conteh will have after he takes some body shots?"

On fight night, the odds at Caesars Palace favor Galindez, but only by 7-5. It's standing-room-only as Conteh makes his way into the ring. The sound rises a few decibels when, moments after Conteh's arrival, a grinning Galindez shuffles down the aisle and heads for his corner. Galindez is carrying two tiny Argentine flags, one in each hand, and waves them at the fans as he stands on the ring apron. Conteh stares stoically at his opponent's back.

The referee is South Africa's Stanley Christodoulou. Both fighters are guaranteed $150,000. The wise guys say they'll earn every penny.

Round 1: As soon as the bell sounds, Conteh starts moving counterclockwise. Galindez stalks him, bobbing and weaving. The round is only 30 seconds old when Galindez stops and drops his hands to his sides, daring Conteh to come forward and exchange. Conteh doesn't take the bait, and a disgusted Galindez gestures to the crowd and shakes his head at Conteh. Conteh snakes in and lands two hard jabs. Galindez leaps off his feet in throwing a sweeping right that misses. Conteh fires a counter under the Galindez right, driving a hook to the Argentine's body. Galindez pivots and fires a left of his own, but it only grazes Conteh as the Englishman moves out of range.

Round 2: The stanza begins as the first had. But halfway through, the crowd leaps to its feet as Conteh times an oncoming Galindez with a left hook, knocking the Argentine into the ropes. Conteh seems as shocked as the crowd; he stands flat-footed, watching as Galindez reacts to the devastating punch. Finally realizing his opportunity, Conteh rushes forward and flails at the obviously shaken Galindez. But Galindez shows his class by staying cool, and within 15 seconds, the WBA champion has not only blocked most of Conteh's punches, but also regained his composure. When Conteh takes a step back, it's Galindez who mounts an attack. Coming off the ropes, he regains some momentum by blasting two cruel hooks off Conteh's lean form. Conteh goes back to the jab and avoids several rushes by Galindez. At the bell, it's Galindez who's once again the aggressor.

Rounds 3-4: Both fighters seem to realize Galindez has taken Conteh's best shot and fought back. These rounds are predictable and somewhat mundane. Conteh boxes, trying to keep his opponent on the end of his jab, and Galindez mauls when he can pin his elusive foe along the ropes or in a corner. At the end of round four, Conteh excites the crowd with a beautiful combination to the head, followed by a four-punch flurry.

Round 5: As the fight enters the first turn, the thoroughbred Conteh leads by a length, maybe a length and a half. But the quarterhorse Galindez seems determined to make a run. Conteh explodes a right off the forehead. The Argentine takes a step back, then immediately starts coming forward again. However, Conteh's punch has opened a cut over Galindez' left eye. Seeing the blood, an invigorated Conteh takes the fight to his opponent. It's a mistake; Galindez is used to seeing his own blood. A big overhand right staggers Conteh, who can't react quickly enough to avoid the sweeping left hook that deposits him on the canvas. Conteh gets to one knee at the count of six, but waits until Christodoulou reaches nine before rising to his feet. Christodoulou is almost bowled over by the bullish rush of Galindez. Conteh's head clears and he wraps his arms around the WBA champion. Trying to break the clinch, Galindez throws Conteh to the canvas.

Rounds 6-7: Conteh slows in the sixth, and Galindez does some of his best body work. Galindez pins Conteh in the Englishman's own corner early in the round, and the Argentine eschews headhunting and pounds his opponent's body. Conteh scores with enough sharp counters to keep Galindez honest, but the WBA champion is clearly doing the more effective work. Conteh returns to form in the seventh. Moving again, he lands several impressive combinations and reopens the cut over Galindez' eye.

Round 9: Galindez strolls to mid-ring and beckons Conteh to come to him. Surprisingly, Conteh obliges. The fighters exchange blows, with Conteh's punches landing first and carrying the most steam. Conteh shows no inclination to move away. Galindez wings punches from all angles, but Conteh picks off most of them. Conteh peppers the face of Galindez with a staccato-like jab and several pitty-pat punches that disrupt the Argentine's rhythm. Galindez lunges forward, and Conteh ducks low to avoid the punch. The resulting thud is heard throughout ringside, and both champions take a step back. The collision of heads has split the skin of both fighters: Galindez has suffered a bad cut on his forehead, directly over his nose; Conteh is bleeding from a one-inch gash over his left eye.

Rounds 10-12: Neither corner can completely stem the flow of blood, and Galindez and Conteh are bleeding as they come out for the 10th. Swelling under Galindez' left eye, coupled with two cuts, make the side of his face look grotesque. The fighters regroup in the 10th, and the action comes to a virtual standstill. The 11th brings an increase in punches thrown, but neither fighter scores with any significant blows. The 12th round is a repeat of the 11th, containing just enough action to keep the crowd interested, but not enough to prevent intermittent catcalls and pleas for more action.

Round 13: Conteh hits his stride. Getting his second wind, the WBC champion works his educated jab overtime and mixes in counter hooks and solid overhand rights each time Galindez tries to force the issue. Galindez is so busy warding off blows that he can't establish an offense of his own. Conteh is actually moving better than he did in the early rounds, and Galindez suddenly appears to be a 30-year-old going on 40. Conteh's punches widen the cuts on Galindez' forehead and over his eye, and the claret streams down the WBA champion's face.

Round 14: A desperate Galindez looks to close the gap in what is still a close fight. Trying without success to cut off the ring, he resorts to roughhouse tactics. Forcing a clinch, Galindez throws what appears to be a deliberate elbow that opens a cut on Conteh's check. Christodoulou warns Galindez that one more infraction will cost him a point. However, an angry Conteh takes matters into his own hands and lands a half-hook, half-uppercut to the groin. Now it's Conteh who receives a lecture from the referee.

Round 15: Christodoulou visits each corner between rounds and screams at both the fighters and their cornermen to finish the fight without incident. Galindez' handlers scream at him to go for the knockout. Hands are everywhere, trying to stem the flow of blood. Conteh answers the bell looking poised and confident. He sticks and moves, throwing safe punches from a distance. Galindez lurches about the ring in futile pursuit. The round is half gone when Galindez buries a left hook just below Conteh's rib cage. The Englishman grimaces in pain. Paralyzed, Conteh absorbs an overhand right that puts him on the ropes. Galindez rains blows on his nearly defenseless foe, who refuses to go down. Christodoulou appears to be moving in to stop the fight when Conteh reaches deep and lands a four-punch combination. The punches are soft, but they stop the referee from taking any action. Galindez renews his assault but misses wildly. Conteh punctuates the round by landing a jab at the sound of the bell.

THE DECISION

The screaming fans remain standing as they await the verdict. The heroic rally by Galindez surely put the outcome in doubt, at least in the minds of most of the spectators. An exhausted Galindez manages to weakly wave one of his small flags. Conteh briefly holds both arms skyward and acknowledges the crowd. Ring announcer Chuck Hull takes the microphone as Christodoulou stands between the two champions, waiting to raise the winner's arm. Lennon's voice booms over the hum of the crowd: Harold Lederman (USA) scores 146-142; Chuck Minker (USA) 146-143; and Juan Jose Guerra (Mexico) 145-144. The winner and undisputed light heavyweight champion of the world—JOHN CONTEH!

Conteh is simply too exhausted to celebrate. A furious Galindez retreats to his corner, pounds both gloves on the post padding, and leaves the ring with his handlers. It has been a good fight, and there were some great rounds.

THE AFTERMATH

Conteh's win fails to stabilize the division for long. It is discovered shortly after the fight that he has once again broken his right hand. After failing to defend the crown for almost a full year, he returns to action against perennial contender Lopez. The WBA refuses to sanction the bout, insisting Conteh fight its number-one rated contender, Rossman. Conteh decides to go ahead with the Lopez bout, and the WBA, in spite of criticism from all corners, declares the title vacant.

A sentimental favorite, Lopez finally receives his just rewards when his heart outweighs Conteh's skills. He outworks Conteh early and drops the Englishman twice in the 14th round to win the WBC title by TKO.

The WBA matches a faded Galindez against Rossman, who stops the Argentine in 12 rounds and wins half the title. It isn't until four years later, in 1983, that the division again sees one ruler on its throne when Spinks begins his distinguished championship reign. ■

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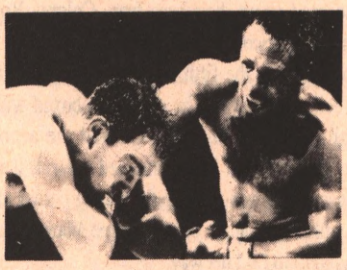

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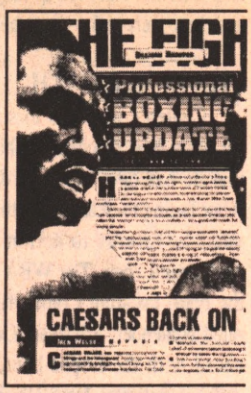

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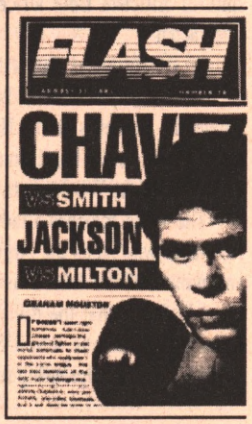

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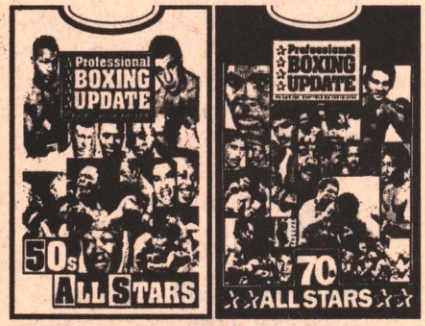

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Gonzalez

(Continued from page 31)

Mandatory challenger Johnson, 132½, had qualified for his first title try by scoring a convincing eighth-round kayo of previously unbeaten Sharmba Mitchell in March. "I'm ready to get it on," he said after the weigh-in. "I'm just unique, a special fighter, a combination of everything. Whatever it takes to win, that's what I'm going to do."

Johnson got in the night's first big punch, a right uppercut to the head with Gonzalez, 134, stuck in a neutral corner late in the opening round. Gonzalez returned the favor late in the second with a right uppercut of his own. Then, in the third, came a hint of the direction the eagerly anticipated bout would take: Gonzalez unleashed a flurry to the head, and a solid right had Johnson doing the Last-Call Shuffle, with legs going every which way, body precariously angled, and eyes glazed. But Johnson refused to go down, throwing out jabs and trying to move away. Gonzalez again landed a right to the head, followed by a right-left-right combination, but still couldn't get the challenger off his feet.

The champion suffered a cut on his lower lip in the third round, and he subsequently expended lots of energy in trying to take out his foe. Over the next few rounds, Gonzalez slowed his attack, content to pick away and await another opportunity. Johnson scored points with jabs and rights to the body, and even landed a left hook flush to the head in the sixth that caused the crowd of 7,500 to let out a gasp of worry.

However, the fans needn't have been concerned about their hero from Colonia Roma (outside Mexico City). Gonzalez was warned for a low blow in the fifth, and landed a right after the bell in the sixth. The champion boxed with a small cut under his right eye and the accompanying puffiness, but maintained control; it was Johnson who wandered to the wrong corner after the fifth, needing the aid of referee Mickey Vann (England) to find his way.

Gonzalez stepped up his attack in round seven. He drew a warning for holding and hitting, but by the end of the round Johnson, 22-1-1 (18), was once again experiencing difficulty in locating his corner. Gonzalez, 34-0 (28), landed a four-punch combination to the body early in the eighth, followed by two lefts to the head, and the crowd could sense the end was near. Body and head shots backed Johnson into the ropes, and though he waved for the champion to come on, the challenger neither blocked the majority of the blows nor threw a significant number of his own punches. Finally, Vann decided he had seen enough and stepped in to stop the onslaught at the 2:05 mark.

After seven rounds, Gonzalez was ahead on all three cards, with Newton Campos (Brazil) scoring 68-64, Bob Logist (Belgium) 69-64, and Angel Luis Guzman (Puerto Rico) 69-63. THE RING had the champion in front by 67-65.

"I let it go longer, I [could] get him killed," the referee explained. "He was hurt. He might have bitched afterward, but when I stopped it, he just looked at me. In the last minute, how many [punches] did he throw? Maybe two? I can't let him stand there and take it. My main job is to protect the two fighters."

After the initial shock—and after denial had worn off—Johnson resigned himself to the defeat. At 2:30 a.m., he entered the postfight party to polite applause and congratulations for a gallant effort.

"I lost to a great champion," Johnson said as he prepared to chow down on the specialty of the house, a piping-hot plate of fajitas with all the trimmings. "I didn't underestimate him. For some reason, I was a bit too relaxed. My combinations were not going the way we ran them off in training.

"He surprised me with his speed. He hurt me a couple of times, but I recovered good. I had him hurt, but I didn't follow up on it. He was very strong and real fast—a lot faster than I thought he'd be. I thought the fight might have been stopped a bit prematurely, but [Vann] is the ref, and I'm just the fighter. I'll be back."

Devouring his own platter of fajitas, Gonzalez remained modest and soft-spoken. "He hurt me twice, maybe three times," said the unbeaten king. "His jab wasn't a straight punch; it was a very powerful jab. But my corner did a good job on my cuts and told me to move, move, move. I was throwing five punches to every one for Leavander, and I was expecting them to stop it. From the seventh round I felt he was ready for me to take out.

"I thought today I showed he needs more to take the world championship out of Mexico."

Talk afterward was of a Gonzalez defense against Joey Gamache in the fall, in either Connecticut or Atlantic City, followed by one final 135-pound appearance against IBF junior lightweight titlist John-John Molina or De La Hoya at the end of the year or the start of 1995. Then it'll be on to new challenges in the junior welterweight division.

There are plenty of masterpieces waiting to be painted by boxing's Michelangelo. A Kostya Tszyu here, a Zack Padilla there. Perhaps he'd like to take a shot at putting Pernell Whitaker on canvas, or David Kamau, or Terry Norris. Maybe even Cesar himself.

The party has barely begun for Miguel Angel Gonzalez. This fiesta is going to last a long while. ■

Bruce Williams, THE RING'S correspondent for Mexico, is based in Austin, Texas.

Time Capsules

(Continued from page 33)

Godoy was an overnight hero. He traveled by train from New York to Los Angeles, stopping at major cities, where huge throngs greeted him like a conquering hero. Soon two movie offers were in Weill's chubby hands. "We'll negotiate after *all* the bids come in," he said. There was also an invitation to visit the president of Chile, at the palace in Santiago, "as soon as our new hero returns home," read the telegram.

As so often happens in such bizarre instances as the Louis-Godoy fight, or non-fight, depending on which side one was on, the whole story can be summed up in a single sentence by one astute insider. In this case, the astute insider was a veteran fight manager named Eddie Walker, whose two claims to fame were guiding Chalky Wright to the featherweight title and guarding Damon Runyon's precious typewriter at all sporting events. Said Walker between mammoth bites into a corned beef sandwich at Lindy's famous Broadway eatery, "That Godoy bum can't fight a lick. If he could, he'd be heavyweight champion today."

Wipe your mouth, Eddie. ■

Sharkey

(Continued from page 61)

Got A Secret would never have called. And when he died at the age of 91, maybe the sports editors would have run more than just a brief.

Yet Sharkey has his place in boxing history. He was the 12th heavyweight champion of the modern era. He fought both Dempsey and Louis. He brought the title back from Europe. And he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June, two months before his death. Sharkey is certainly not forgotten. But being remembered can sometimes be hell, too.

"Of all the heavyweight champions who held titles, Sharkey is by far the worst."

–Sportswriter Tom Doran, 1933

Okay, so those words were written 45 years before Leon Spinks dethroned Ali, but you get the idea.

"Sharkey should throw away his gloves and go back to his garden," continued Doran. "His favorite flower should be the morning glory because he was always one himself. If this past summer has resulted in nothing else, it has not been in vain because the great Sharkey myth has been exploded so that the world now realizes what a prize joke 'The Loud Lith' was as a fighter."

The Loud Lith was just one of several nicknames given to Sharkey by the press. Though he came off as an Irishman from Boston, Sharkey was actually a Lithuanian from Binghamton, New York, who was born Joseph Paul Cukoschay in 1902. Several variations of his family name were used during his career, including Zukauska. He became Jack Sharkey shortly after leaving the Navy. Jack was used in honor of his idol, Jack Dempsey, and he took Sharkey from Sailor Tom Sharkey, the heavyweight contender from the turn of the century.

After losing to Tommy Loughran in September 1933, Sharkey put his gloves away for a year. But it's difficult to imagine he was following Doran's advice. Sharkey hated the press, especially Damon Runyon, Bill Farnsworth, and Dan Parker. Parker once wrote a column concerning several disparaging comments Sharkey had directed at Rocky Marciano. Parker ripped into Sharkey under the headline "Mirror, Mirror On The Wall, Who's The Biggest Bum Of All?"

John Kiernan of *The New York Times* agreed with Parker's sentiment. "Jack Sharkey so often gave a 10 cents show for a $27.50 charge at the gate," he wrote in 1930. That came after Sharkey's loss to Schmeling in his first title bout.

"I have a way of saying things that doesn't look good in print."

–Jack Sharkey

He was never a bad man. In fact, in today's society, Sharkey would be hailed as the perfect role model. He didn't drink, and he never got in trouble with the law. He was a veteran, having served in the Navy during World War I, and the consummate family man. He once told a reporter, "You don't know what I was saying when I was jumping around the ring like a crazy man after the referee said to me, 'You win.' I was saying over and over, 'Won't those kids be happy. Won't my wife be happy.'"

Those kids were Dorothy, Marilyn, and Jack Jr. His wife was Dorothy, and he referred to her

(Continued on page 78)

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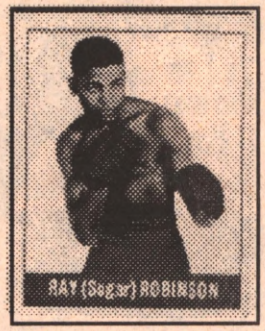

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Publisher's Weekly

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Sharkey

(Continued from page 77)

as Dean. Sharkey once left training camp in New York and traveled back home to Boston after learning his son was sick. The person he most wanted to see after his loss to Schmeling was his wife. When he found her, she was crying. "Don't worry, don't worry," he said. "I'm all right. They took it away from me."

Fishing was another of Sharkey's loves. "Jack could have been one of the greatest if he had half as much stomach for fighting as he has for fishing," wrote Parker.

Sharkey often broke training for a day of fly fishing—"It gives you time to think," he said—and after his career, made a small fortune working the sportsman shows that were popular during the '50s and '60s. His fly-tying and casting skills were all the rage, and he struck a close friendship with another fishing fanatic, baseball great Ted Williams. After his retirement from the ring, Sharkey once fished for 121 straight days.

"Save your money and try hunting and fishing," he once said. "They should write that on the wall at Stillman's Gym."

Sharkey's crimes were that he often trashed his opponents through the press, was quick to provide an excuse after a loss, and made no effort to hide the fact that his biggest motivation for fighting was money.

"Shakespeare never wrote anything more readable or educational than this," he said when handed a check for $17,700 after his win over Harry Wills.

He was paid $150 for his first pro bout, but by the time he fought Carnera in 1933, he had grossed more than $1-million. He earned $100,000 for each of his 1929 fights with Loughran and Young Stribling, $50,000 for beating Tom Heeney in 1928, and $210,000 for his bout with Dempsey, the first non-title fight to produce a $1-million gate. By 1929, he was living in a $100,000 home in the Chestnut Hill section of Newton, Massachusetts. And this was during the start of the Great Depression.

If the fans weren't rankled by his wealth, they had his words. Sharkey despised Tunney, at least partly because he felt the former champion had avoided him. After his rival's retirement, a reporter remarked that Tunney had gotten everything he could out of boxing. "Everything except the one thing he needed most of all," Sharkey replied. "If there ever was a man who needed a good beating, it was Tunney."

He later referred to Schmeling as "that lunkhead," and "the big square-head." He bounced into the ring before his 1926 fight with Wills, grabbed a microphone from a radio announcer, and shouted, "I'm gonna knock the hell outta this big bum." (He won the fight on a foul in the 13th round.)

"Sharkey tells the truth," Frank Wallace wrote in 1933. "The truth usually hurts somebody. In Jack's case, it has hurt himself."

"Despite all this, I wish to state that Jack Sharkey, from all angles, is one of the most worthy heavyweight champs we ever had."

–Sportswriter Frank Wallace, 1933

Sharkey did have his fans among the press. One of them was Runyon, who called him "the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of fistiana."

"Erratic, emotional, with the ring temperament of a grand opera prima donna," Runyon wrote in 1933. "The Lithuanian nearly always leaves behind him in his fights some strange and untoward happenstance. Yet back of his peculiar ring personality is the staid disposition of a family man who loves his fireside and his kids, and who is happiest when he is far removed from the roar of the mob.

"I think that ultimately Sharkey will be rated a great fighter, yet he has been one of the strangest characters that ever poked his nose between the ropes. The real Sharkey is a likable chap."

Writer Ned Brown viewed Sharkey as a throwback to the old guard of Fitzsimmons, Jeffries, and Dempsey, fighters who weren't afraid of what they might say to the press before a fight.

"He had boxing skill, cleverness, perfect jabs, and a heart that only a top-notcher possesses," observed THE RING Publisher Nat Fleischer after Sharkey's win over Wills.

That observation came during a changing of the guard. A month earlier, Tunney had beaten Dempsey. Now Sharkey was viewed as a suitable contender. That Dempsey never fought top-rated contender Wills only added to the significance of Sharkey's win. But Tunney-Sharkey never came off. Instead, Sharkey was matched with Dempsey, with the winner to face Tunney.

"There were always two men I knew I could beat. One was Jack Dempsey, the other was Gene Tunney."

–Jack Sharkey

In July 1927, more than 82,000 fans squeezed into Yankee Stadium. Promoter Tex Rickard had promised Sharkey, "Beat Dempsey and you get the next shot at Tunney."

It was a pro-Dempsey crowd, which cheered the former champion's every move. Sharkey, the villain, was booed. But when the opening bell

sounded, the crowd sat in silence as "The Manassa Mauler" got mauled. Sharkey punched Dempsey across the ring, sticking jabs in his face and rocking him with uppercuts and left hooks. Late in the round, Dempsey appeared to be out on his feet, with only the ropes holding him up. Sharkey was one punch away from a title shot and he ... turned to Runyon sitting at ringside and bellowed, "Listen at 'em booing me. They paid $25 each to do it."

When the round ended, Dempsey dragged himself to his corner while Sharkey yelled to the crowd, "There's your great Jack Dempsey. There's your hero."

He should also have yelled, "There's your winner." Sharkey outboxed Dempsey through the next four rounds, but the former champion, given a second chance, held on. In the seventh, he went to work on Sharkey's body and clinched at every opportunity.

At one point, he threw a right that landed near Sharkey's beltline. "Foul!" Sharkey yelled to referee Jack O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan didn't say a word. Then Dempsey fired another right at Sharkey's midsection. Sharkey grabbed his groin, turned toward O'Sullivan, and began to complain of another foul. He never got the chance to finish. Seeing an exposed chin, Dempsey whipped a left that caught Sharkey on the side of his face. Sharkey went down for the count.

"I didn't foul him," Dempsey said later. "I just softened him up with the rights to the belly, and then finished him with a left hook to the chin."

Others disagreed. O'Sullivan said he had warned Dempsey at least once to keep his punches up. James Dawson of *The New York Times* wrote that Sharkey was hit low at least four times. Runyon and Grantland Rice both agreed that Sharkey had been fouled.

Others took Dempsey to task for hitting Sharkey when he turned to the ref. "What was I going to do, send him a letter?" Dempsey replied.

Of course, the controversy would have been moot had Sharkey kept his mouth shut in the first round and finished Dempsey when he had had the chance. "He gave Dempsey the worst beating in an opening canto that Dempsey ever took," wrote Rice 10 years after the bout. "Sharkey, with all his faults, and there were plenty, was the only ring fighter I ever saw who tore into Dempsey and had him groggy in the first two minutes. And Dempsey admits that."

But why had he let Dempsey survive? "I don't have an answer for that," he told Rice. "I'm just a dumb Lithuanian."

Goodbye, title shot. Dempsey was awarded a rematch with Tunney later that year and lost again. Tunney knocked out Heeney the following summer and retired in September 1928. Sharkey never forgave him for not granting him an opportunity at the title. Furthermore, he had trouble disguising his feelings: "Nature probably intended him for a chorus boy, and he made himself into a champion of the world. He started in with nothing but a crush on himself, and now look at him. Retired and undefeated champion. Big bankroll and a nice wife and a pleasant future ahead of him. He gives me a pain in the neck, but he's a smart guy."

" ... Unless Schmeling is given the decision, I will kill boxing in this state."

–Journalist Arthur Brisbane

Bolstered by wins over Stribling and Loughran in 1929, the former a third-round knockout that earned him the American heavyweight title, Sharkey finally got his shot at the world title in June 1930, when he met Schmeling in New York for Tunney's vacated crown. Once again, Sharkey found himself inside Yankee Stadium, and once again he had the edge in the early rounds. But this time, it was his opponent who cried foul.

In the fourth round, Sharkey fired a left to Schmeling's midsection, and the German promptly took a seat on the canvas. Referee Jim Crowley failed to make a decision. Joe Jacobs, Schmeling's manager, jumped into the ring, crying foul. Crowley approached the judges, both of whom said they saw no foul. Then things got interesting. Arthur Brisbane, a highly regarded journalist, was sitting behind judge Harold Barnes. As legend has it, Brisbane shouted, "That was a foul below the belt, and unless Schmeling is given the decision, I will kill boxing in this state."

"When Barnes heard that, he said he had seen a foul. So I had to concur and award the fight to Schmeling," Crowley later said.

Barnes later denied being influenced by Brisbane's comment or that Brisbane even commented until after the decision was made. The judge said he gave Crowley the foul sign three times: "Brisbane was sitting next to me, but he did not open his mouth until the decision was rendered. Then he turned to me. 'Sonny,' he said, 'you've just saved boxing in New York.'"

Regardless of who said what and when, a new champion was crowned while sitting on a stool in his corner and doubled over in pain. Sharkey denied ever fouling Schmeling: "I like fair play. I am a fair-play fighter. I'm not a foul-fighter, no matter what my enemies say."

"The general consensus is that it was one of the worst decisions ever given."

–Sportswriter Grantland Rice

(Continued on page 80)

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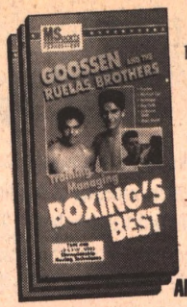

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Sharkey

(Continued from page 79)

Predictably, Sharkey got a rematch with Schmeling, with the fighters meeting at Madison Square Bowl in Long Island City in June 1933. Much had been written, of course, about their first meeting, and fans and writers alike felt cheated by Crowley's decision. As a result, Sharkey began to emerge as a sympathetic figure. Most observers felt the German still hadn't really won the title. But, as usual, controversy would find its way into a Sharkey fight.

A crowd of 61,863 paid $432,365 to see the match. They left disappointed. There was more action packed into the four rounds of their first encounter than in the entire 15 rounds of Sharkey-Schmeling II. Most ringsiders thought a draw would have been a fair verdict. There were no knockdowns, and neither fighter was ever in trouble. Pressed to identify the aggressor, most would have picked Schmeling. So there was more than a bit of shock when referee Gunboat Smith raised Sharkey's hand and awarded him the split decision.

"We wuz robbed," cried Joe Jacobs.

New York City Mayor Jimmy Walker told a German broadcaster, "That was the rottenest decision I ever heard in my life."

Asked Schmeling, "But how can Sharkey beat me running away all the time?"

For his part, Sharkey just gathered his belongings in the dressing room and smiled. "I am returning to Boston with the heavyweight championship of the world, the title that our great John L. Sullivan lost 40 years ago," he said.

Sharkey's manager, Johnny Buckley, called it "a battle of vindication." Others saw it differently. "Certainly, no heavyweight championship was ever taken away from a titleholder in such fashion as this," wrote Rice. "Schmeling won his title two years ago on the floor. Jack Sharkey won his new title in retreat through the final four rounds. Maybe this squares it, if there is anything square in this peculiar sport."

"I give you Jack Sharkey flat."
–Heavyweight champion Primo Carnera

The fame and fortune Sharkey expected to come with the title never materialized. The fact that many felt he had lost to Schmeling didn't help his cause. Neither did his inactivity. Sharkey took most off the year off following his victory, returning to the ring after more than a year to defend against Primo Carnera. Sharkey had tuned up for the second Schmeling bout by impressively outpointing the Italian giant. Most observers thought the champion would win again with equal ease.

Sharkey liked to boast of having taken the title back from Europe with his defeat of Schmeling. He gave it right back when Carnera floored him in the sixth round. As was his style, Sharkey had an excuse. Earlier that year, Carnera had knocked out Ernie Schaaf, a former training partner of Sharkey's. Schaaf never recovered from the beating and subsequently died from head injuries sustained in the bout. "I couldn't get Schaaf out of my mind," Sharkey said years later. "I froze in the ring and I got knocked out. That's all there is to it. Being beat by a big ox like Carnera, I was determined to quit. I fought a few more times, but that was all."

Some felt Carnera's knockout was not legitimate, and Sharkey was pressed on the matter by writers and several members of the New York State Athletic Commission. He denied having taken a fall: "Nobody throws the heavyweight championship away. Nobody knows the abuse your children take in school when their father loses."

Always the family man. Of course, Carnera had his own family, and he celebrated his victory with a large party at a New York City hotel. At one point, the new champion grabbed an accordion and started playing "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

"Give us a b-flat," someone shouted.

"I give you Sharkey flat," Carnera yelled back.

"They love me when I'm getting my brains knocked out."
–Jack Sharkey

Sharkey made a brief comeback, fighting five more times. He called it quits after Joe Louis stopped him in three rounds in August 1936. Ironically, Sharkey left the ring a hero.

"I wasn't very popular anywhere," he recalled. "You know the first time anybody ever went for me [in New York] was the night I fought Joe Louis. I got belted to the canvas in the first round, and the referee, standing over me, said in a low voice, 'Try to get up, Jack. Everybody's with you tonight.' There I was on all fours. My head was full of bees. I felt as if I had an awful toothache. But I heard the referee and I had to laugh. I said to myself, 'So everybody's for me, eh? Well, that's the way they've always been. They love me when I'm getting my brains knocked out."

Perhaps the fact that he was no longer a threat to the title had something to do with it. Or maybe it was because Sharkey bridged the gap between the Dempsey and Louis eras. He was the only man to have fought both and, not surprisingly, was always pressed for his thoughts on a Dempsey-Louis dream match.

"I fought Louis when he was on the way up and Dempsey when he was on the way down," he said in 1954. "At their primes, I think Dempsey would have won. But of course, just one of those TNT rights from Louis could have changed the whole picture."

It was one of those TNT rights from Louis that told Sharkey his fighting days were over. He retired with a career record of 38-14-3 (14).

While his ability, guts, and decision-making were all called into question during one time or another, nobody could take away this: Sharkey fought everyone, he ducked nobody; he chased Tunney, and when that failed, tried to get a second fight with Dempsey; and he never once complained about the negative press or the abuse heaped on him by fans. He was also a heavyweight champion of the world.

On August 17, Sharkey died of respiratory arrest at Beverly Hospital in Beverly, Massachusetts. He is survived by his three children, 14 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.

"A man never gets over being champ," Sharkey once said. "When he's champ, the attention gives him a swelled head. He's ill at ease all the time. He's expected to do the perfect thing all the time, and he can't live up to it. When he's an ex-champ, he still gets a bang out of being recognized. If he hears someone whisper, 'There's Jack Sharkey. He used to be a heavyweight champ,' it makes him feel good all over. I've learned this out of my life as a celebrity: It's hell to be forgotten. It's nice to be remembered." ■

Roger Mooney is a frequent contributor to* THE RING. *He is a sportswriter for the Sun Herald and lives in Port Charlotte, Florida.

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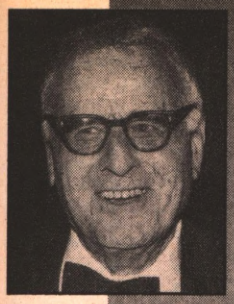


Fiske On Fights

By Jack Fiske

It all comes down to the eye of the beholder—and the minds of the media.

As a father and a grandfather, I hoped my progeny would be as "good" growing into adulthood as I was. Of course, I've been disappointed. Aren't most of us?

I wish the same for boxers of this era: that they can emulate those I grew up watching. So far, I've again been disappointed.

Before and after a fight of any importance, I speak with a friend from out of state. Like me, he grew up and matured watching the boxing staples of the '40s, '50s, and '60s: the Wednesday and Friday night fights. Sometimes we went to the Garden and St. Nick's.

When we talk, we more often than not denigrate the fighters we've watched on the tube. "They just can't fight," is usually our two-man consensus. We invariably compare them to the fighters of our youth. "Inept, terrible, boring stiffs," are some of the kinder appraisals. The fighters' shortcomings are all too often both numerous and obvious.

Are we being fair expecting the moderns to be as good as those who performed before them? Maybe not. But our feeling is probably unanimous sentiment among the old-timers.

In my city of San Francisco, there is a loosely knit group of old-time boxers, mostly of the clubfighter variety, who meet once a month to schmooze. I never see any of them at the local cards. I once asked a former state champion, a big name locally and a box office draw, why he doesn't attend.

"They just can't fight," he said with a show of disdain.

Is he unfair, too?

Every sport today, with the exception of boxing, is filled with athletes who are bigger, stronger, better taught, and better conditioned than those of 25 or 50 years ago. Boxing, of course, has the same weight divisions that have been standard for nearly 150 years. (And several additional ones.) So fighters, with the exception of heavyweights, continue to compete against those their own size and weight. Still, they have less talent than their predecessors.

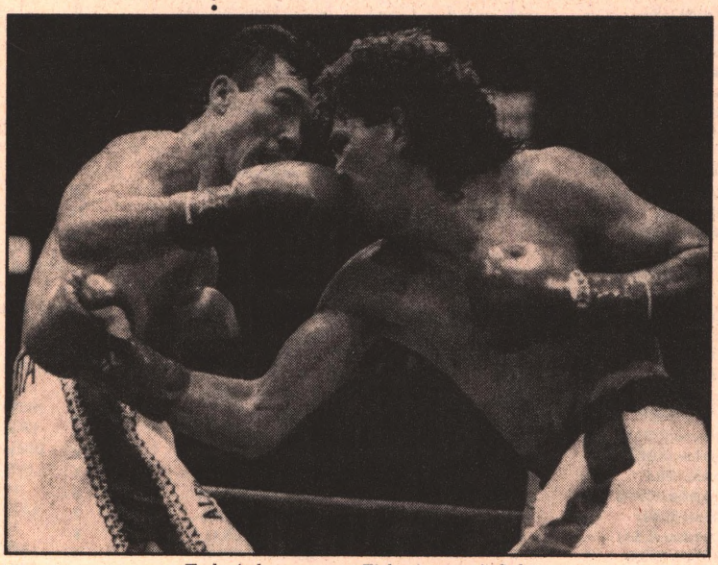


Photo by Brent Cook

Today's boxers, says Fiske, just can't fight

(There's a reverse twist to this. In 1951, Jimmy Jacobs and Nick Beck showed their voluminous collection of fight films to Los Angeles and New York sportswriters. They wanted to draw a comparison of the turn-of-the-century fighters with those of the day. The bare-knuckled breed and the so-called scientific boxers who followed were shown to be clumsy, lead-footed brawlers. Regardless of what the writers thought about the contemporary fighters, Jacobs and Beck made their point.)

How does the media judge a fighter? He's either a bum or a superstar, with no in between. One poor performance and the star slips to lesser status. One exciting victory and the bum is on the verge of greatness. The media can always use a good story or angle, so it doesn't make a difference whether the loser can fight or the winner can't.

In the long run, it's the media that determines who the legends of the ring will be, and who will forever be labeled also-rans. This media member is of the opinion that the fighters of today just can't fight. But for those of you who don't know what you missed in the old days, you have to love what remains. After all, it's the only game in town. ■

Worldwide Ratings

WBC
as of July

WBA
as of July

IBF
as of September

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	–	C	C
Oliver McCall (USA)	1	1	1
Tony Tucker (USA)	2	2	2
Lionel Butler (USA)	3	12	–
Joe Hipp (USA)	4	6	4
Larry Donald (USA)	5	11	8
Bruce Seldon (USA)	6	3	3
Jorge Luis Gonzalez (CUBA)	7	9	12
Alexandre Zolkin (RUS)	8	–	–
Larry Holmes (USA)	9	–	–
Henry Akinwande (GB)	10	7	6
Razor Ruddock (CAN)	12	4	–
Frans Botha (SA)	18	5	9
Buster Mathis (USA)	15	8	7
Nate Tubbs (USA)	22	10	11
Riddick Bowe (USA)	–	–	5
George Foreman (USA)	–	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Anaclet Wamba (FRA)	C	–	–
Orlin Norris (USA)	–	C	–
Alfred Cole (USA)	–	–	C
Norbert Ekassi (CAM)	1	7	8
Carl Thompson (GB)	2	10	10
Robert Daniels (USA)	3	–	12
Kenny Keene (USA)	4	5	–
Adolpho Washington (USA)	5	–	3
Chemak Saleta (POL)	6	–	9
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	7	–	–
Jade Scott (USA)	8	–	7
Akim Tafer (FRA)	9	12	11
Arthur Williams (USA)	10	–	–
Bobby Czyz (USA)	12	1	–
Thomas Hearns (USA)	–	2	6
Marcelo Figueroa (ARG)	18	3	–
James Warring (USA)	16	4	–
Ralf Rocchigiani (GER)	–	6	–
James Heath (USA)	–	8	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	9	4
Uriah Grant (USA)	17	–	1
Sergei Kobozev (RUS)	11	–	2
Richard Mason (USA)	29	11	5

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Mike McCallum (USA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	–
Henry Maske (GER)	–	–	C
Frank Tate (USA)	1	5	–
Randall Yonker (USA)	2	12	–
Egerton Marcus (CAN)	3	7	1
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	4	2	6
Darius Michalczewski (POL)	5	3	–
Charles Williams (USA)	6	–	5
Ernest Mateen (USA)	7	–	–
Eddy Smulders (HOLL)	8	6	11
Maurice Core (GB)	9	–	–
Dan Schommer (USA)	10	–	–
Wang Sup Lee (KOR)	–	1	–
Eric Nicoletta (FRA)	12	4	–
Brent Kosolofski (CAN)	–	8	–
Drake Thadzi (CAN)	–	9	–
Ernie Magdaleno (USA)	13	10	9
Duran Williams (USA)	–	–	2
Jeff Harding (AUSTRL)	–	–	3
John Scully (USA)	29	–	4
Iran Barkley (USA)	–	–	7
Rudy Nix (USA)	–	–	8
Greg Everett (USA)	–	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Nigel Benn (GB)	C	–	–
Steve Little (USA)	–	C	8
James Toney (USA)	–	–	C
Frank Liles (USA)	1	1	–
Henry Wharton (GB)	2	7	4
Frederic Seiller (FRA)	3	10	9
Tim Littles (USA)	4	5	6
Vinny Pazienza (USA)	5	–	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	6	8	3
Tony Byrd (USA)	7	2	1
Kenny Bowman (USA)	8	–	–
John David Jackson (USA)	9	–	–
Juan Carlos Gimenez (PAR)	10	–	–
Frank Nicotra (FRA)	22	3	12
James Cook (GB)	–	4	–
Byun Gin Kang (KOR)	–	6	–
Warren Williams (USA)	–	9	–
Roy Jones (USA)	–	–	2
Lonnie Bradley (USA)	–	–	5
Darrin Van Horn (USA)	–	–	7
Tony Thornton (USA)	15	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Gerald McClellan (USA)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	1	12	6
Julian Jackson (VI)	2	–	5
Quincy Taylor (USA)	3	10	7
Lamar Parks (USA)	4	–	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	5	9	1
Neville Brown (GB)	6	–	11
Joe Lipsey (USA)	7	11	4
Richie Woodhall (GB)	8	–	–
Lonnie Bradley (USA)	9	–	–
Silvio Branco (ITA)	10	–	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	–	1	8
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	2	–
John David Jackson (USA)	–	3	3
Peter Venancio (BRA)	–	4	–
Segundo Mercado (ECU)	16	5	2
Shinji Takehara (JAP)	17	6	–
Vinny Pazienza (USA)	–	7	–
Roberto Duran (PAN)	–	8	–
Rafael Williams (USA)	–	–	9
Juan Viloria (COL)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Terry Norris (USA)	C	–	–
Julio Cesar Vasquez (ARG)	–	C	–
Gianfranco Rosi (ITA)	–	–	C
Carl Daniels (USA)	1	2	5
Simon Brown (USA)	2	8	–
Julio C. Green (USA)	3	4	3
Troy Waters (AUSTRL)	4	10	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	5	–	6
Stephen Martinez (USA)	6	–	–
Darrin Morris (USA)	7	11	–
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	8	3	7
Patrick Mbehbenle (CAMER)	9	–	–
Ludovic Proto (FRA)	10	–	–
Winky Wright (USA)	–	1	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	5	1
Tony Marshall (USA)	15	6	9
Bernard Razzano (FRA)	26	7	–
Curtis Summit (USA)	20	9	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	11	–	2
Gilberto Barreto (COL)	–	–	4
Keith Holmes (USA)	–	–	8
Andrew Council (USA)	–	–	10

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pernell Whitaker (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
James McGirt (USA)	1	9	5
Larry Barnes (USA)	2	–	2
Gary Jacobs (GB)	3	6	6
Meldrick Taylor (USA)	4	8	–
Andrew Murray (GUY)	5	3	4
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	6	–	–
Santos Cardona (PR)	7	–	11
Luis Santana (USA)	8	–	–
Kenny Gould (USA)	9	–	–
David Gonzalez (USA)	10	–	7
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	1	1
Gert Bo Jacobsen (DEN)	–	2	–
Jung Oh Park (KOR)	12	4	–
Crisanto Espana (VEN)	14	5	–
Freddy Ladd (USA)	–	7	9
Oba Carr (USA)	–	10	3
Anthony Stephens (USA)	–	–	8
Roger Turner (USA)	–	11	10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	C	–	–
Juan M. Coggi (ARG)	–	C	–
Jake Rodriguez (USA)	–	–	C

Frankie Randall (USA)	1	1	10
David Kamau (USA)	2	7	12
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	3	–	1
Tony Lopez (USA)	4	–	–
Joey Gamache (USA)	5	–	–
Freddie Rojas (CHILE)	6	–	–
Hugo Pineda (COL)	7	4	5
Hector Lopez (MEX)	8	–	–
Lonnie Smith (USA)	9	–	–
Bill Costello (USA)	10	–	–
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	18	2	–
Alberto Cortes (ARG)	–	3	–
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	5	–
Won Park (KOR)	28	6	–
George Scott (USA)	19	8	–
Valery Kayumba (FRA)	20	9	–
Christian Merle (FRA)	26	10	–
Rodney Moore (USA)	–	–	2
Charles Murray (USA)	15	–	3
Pedro Padilla (COL)	–	–	4
Giovanni Parisi (ITA)	–	–	6
Pedro Sanchez (DR)	–	–	7
Freddie Pendleton (USA)	–	–	8
Darryll Tyson (USA)	12	–	9

LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Nazarov Olzubek (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Rafael Ruelas (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Leavander Johnson (USA)	1	1	7
Miguel Julio (COL)	2	5	1
Jean Baptist Mendy (FRA)	3	–	–
Ramon Marchena (MEX)	4	–	5
Wilfrido Rocha (COL)	5	–	–
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	6	–	–
John Montantesz (USA)	7	–	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	8	–	–
Racheed Lawal (DEN)	9	12	–
Marty Jakubowski (USA)	10	–	11
Joey Gamache (USA)	–	2	12
Fabian Tejeda (ARG)	–	3	–
Tony Lopez (USA)	–	4	4
Carl Griffith (USA)	17	6	–
Eduardo Molina (COL)	23	7	2
Adrianus Taroreh (INDO)	30	8	–
Masuaki Takeda (JAP)	–	9	–
Dino Canoy (PHIL)	–	10	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	–	–	3
John Lark (USA)	–	–	6
Steve Johnston (USA)	–	–	8
Dingaan Thobela (SA)	13	–	9
Ivan Robinson (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Jesse James Leija (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
John-John Molina (PR)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gabriel Ruelas (USA)	1	4	5
Jimmy Garcia (COL)	2	–	–
Calvin Grove (USA)	3	8	2
Regilio Tuur (HOLL)	4	–	–
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	5	–	–
Ed Hopson (USA)	6	6	4
Victor Hugo Paz (ARG)	7	2	–
Eugene Speed (USA)	8	–	–
Tony Pep (CAN)	9	–	–
Ulrich Johnson (TRIN)	10	–	–
Jimmy Garcia (COL)	–	1	–
Marcos Guevara (VEN)	20	3	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	26	5	–
Wilson Rodriguez (DR)	11	7	1
Lamar Murphy (USA)	–	9	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	30	10	–
Moises Pedroza (COL)	–	–	3
Arturo Gatti (USA)	19	–	6
Fred Liberatore (USA)	13	12	7
Azumah Nelson (GHA)	–	–	8
Fernando Rodriguez (USA)	–	–	9
Samart Payakaroon (THAI)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Kevin Kelley (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Eloy Rojas (VEN)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tom Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	–	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	2	–	7
Miguel Arrozal (PHIL)	3	3	4
Ever Beleno (COL)	4	6	2
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	5	–	10
Francisco Segura (USA)	6	10	1
Tony Green (USA)	7	–	3
Yung Kyun Park (KOR)	8	2	–
Jose Vida Ramos (DR)	9	–	–
Louie Espinoza (USA)	10	–	–
Luis Mendoza (COL)	–	1	–
Tsuyoshi Harada (JAP)	14	4	–
Samart Payakaroon (THAI)	–	5	–
Fernando Rodriguez (USA)	29	7	–
Orlando Soto (PAN)	17	8	8
Sean Murphy (USA)	–	9	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	–	5
Jose Badillo (PR)	–	11	6
Benny Amparo (USA)	19	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Tracy Patterson (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Wilfredo Vasquez (PR)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	**27**	**–**	**C**
Julio Gervacio (DR)	1	–	5
Daniel Zaragoza (MEX)	2	–	–
Jesus Salud (USA)	3	10	6
Jose Badillo (PR)	4	–	–
Frank Toledo (USA)	5	–	–
Nestor Farias (ARG)	6	7	–
Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)	7	–	7
Hiroaki Yokota (JAP)	8	3	–
Sergio Liendo (ARG)	9	–	–
Junior Jones (USA)	10	8	10
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	1	–
Arnulfo Romero (PAN)	17	2	–
Thierry Jacob (FRA)	21	4	–
Yuichi Kasai (JAP)	19	5	–
Ramon Guzman (VEN)	–	6	–
Jae Won Choi (KOR)	–	9	–
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	1
Pablo Ozuna (COL)	–	–	2
Welcome Ncita (SA)	12	–	3
Kennedy McKinney (USA)	–	–	4
Agapito Sanchez (DR)	28	–	8
Eddie Cook (USA)	–	–	9

BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Yasuei Yakushiji (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Daorung Chuvatana (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Orlando Canizales (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	1	–	4
Jung Il Byun (KOR)	2	–	–
Victor Rabanales (MEX)	3	–	–
Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)	4	–	–
Dong Choon Lee (KOR)	5	–	–
John Armour (GB)	6	–	7
Roberto Moran (ARG)	7	–	–
Harold Mestre (COL)	8	7	2
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	9	–	–
Naseem Hamed (GB)	10	9	–
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	11	1	–
Eliecer Julio (COL)	12	2	10
Eddie Cook (USA)	–	3	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	4	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	–	5	–
Abraham Torres (VEN)	29	6	8
Isaias Zamudio (MEX)	–	8	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	–	10	–
Juvenal Berrio (COL)	–	–	1
Lauren Ramirez (SPA)	26	–	3
Ricardo Vargas (MEX)	19	–	5
Sergio Reyes (USA)	–	–	6
Mbuelo Botile (SA)	25	–	9

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Hiroshi Kawashima (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Katsuya Onizuka (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Harold Grey (COL)	**22**	**–**	**C**
Carlos Salazar (ARG)	1	–	–
Jose Luis Bueno (MEX)	2	9	–
Khaoyai Mahasarakam (THAI)	3	2	–
Cecilio Espino (MEX)	4	–	11
Sung Kil Moon (KOR)	5	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	6	–	–
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	7	4	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	8	–	3
In Joo Cho (KOR)	9	–	–
Armando Salazar (MEX)	10	–	–
Hyung Chul Lee (KOR)	–	1	–
Ernie Cataluna (PHIL)	–	3	–
David Griman (VEN)	–	5	–
Seung Koo Lee (KOR)	23	6	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	19	7	9
In Sik Koh (KOR)	17	8	–
Ernesto Briceno (VEN)	–	10	–
Julio Borboa (MEX)	–	–	1
Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)	–	–	2
Johnny Tapia (USA)	11	–	4
Rolando Bohol (PHIL)	–	–	5
Ratanachai Sow Voraphin (THAI)	20	–	6
Jaji Sibali (SA)	–	–	7
Rodolfo Blanco (COL)	–	–	8
Lamhot Simamora (INDO)	15	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	**C**	**–**	**–**
San Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Phichit Sithbangprachan (THAI)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Hugo Soto (ARG)	1	10	–
Chatchai Eric-Gym (THAI)	2	11	–
Alberto Jimenez (MEX)	3	–	9
Mark Johnson (USA)	4	–	4
Danny Romero (USA)	5	–	5
Danny Nunez (DR)	6	–	–
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	7	–	–
Raul Rios (MEX)	8	–	–
Miguel Martinez (MEX)	9	–	8
Enrique Orozco (MEX)	10	–	–
Evangelino Perez (PAN)	27	1	–
Alvaro Mercado (COL)	–	2	–
Hiroki Ioka (JAP)	26	3	–
Yong Kang Kim (KOR)	–	4	–
Aquiles Guzman (VEN)	–	5	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	6	–
Chokchai Chorniwat (THAI)	18	7	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	23	8	–
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	–	9	1
Francisco Tejedor (COL)	22	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	25	–	3
Abdi Pohan (INDO)	–	–	6
Robbie Regan (GB)	16	–	7
Arthur Johnson (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Humberto Gonzalez (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**C**
Leo Gamez (VEN)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Javier Varguez (MEX)	1	–	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	2	8	5
Jesus Chong (MEX)	3	6	–
Miguel Angel Granados (MEX)	4	–	–
Manuel de Jesus Herrera (DR)	5	–	–
Fahlan Sakkirin (THAI)	6	3	2
Toto Pow Phongsawang (THAI)	7	–	–
Pablo Tiznado (MEX)	8	–	–
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	9	–	–
Phanieng Sasiprabha-Poontarat (THAI)	10	–	–
Hi Yong Choi (KOR)	18	1	–
Virgilio Chifundo (PAN)	26	2	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	4	–
Yuichi Hosono (JAP)	15	5	7
Eric Griffin (USA)	12	7	4
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	–	9	–
Yong Jin Kim (KOR)	30	10	–
Michael Carbajal (USA)	–	–	1
Jesus Zuniga (COL)	–	–	3
Kwang Sun Kim (KOR)	–	–	6
Juan Cordoba (ARG)	–	–	8
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	21	–	9
Rosando Alvarez (NIG)	–	–	10

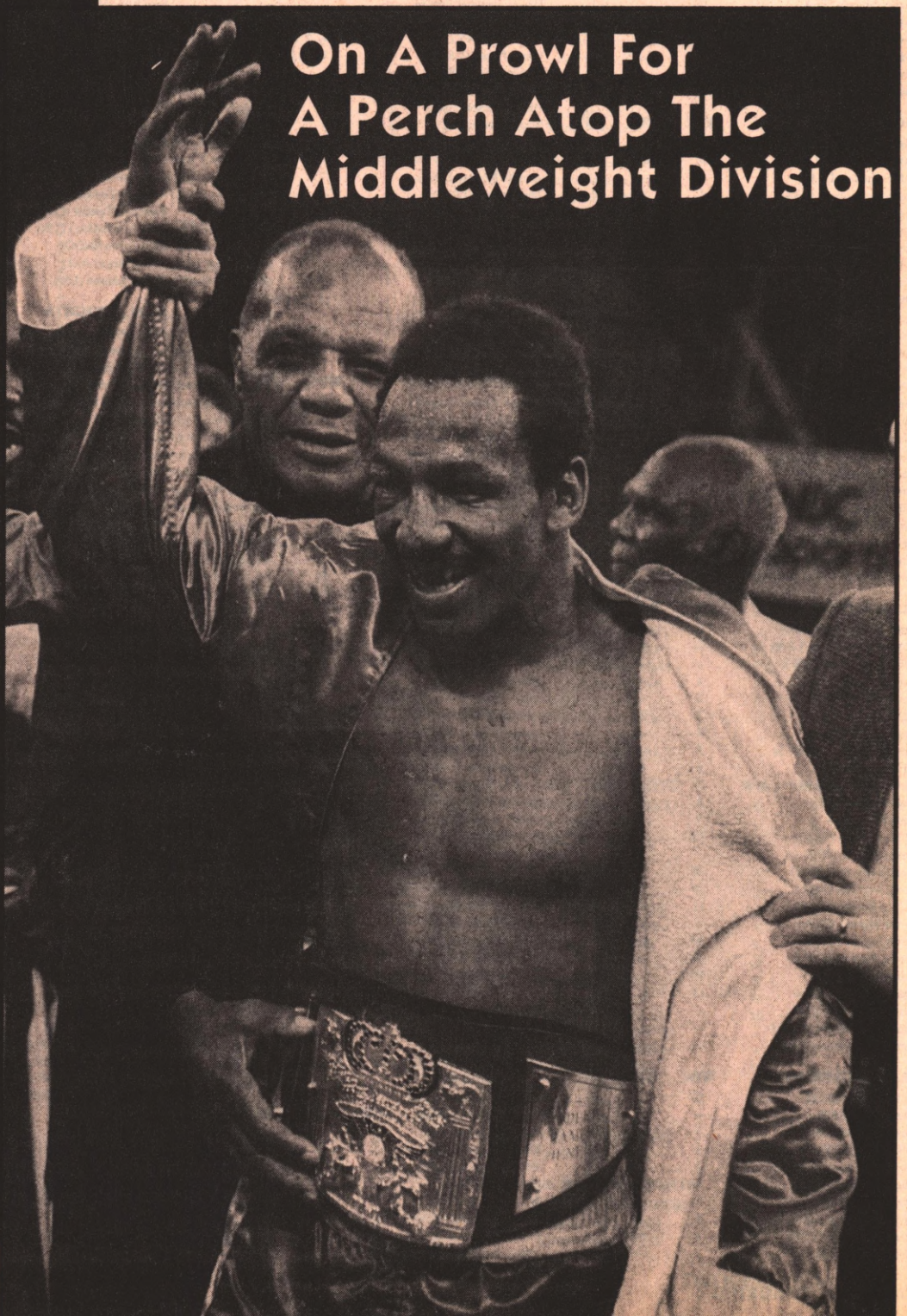
STRAWWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Ratanapol Vorapin (THAI)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	1	4	–
Kermin Guardia (COL)	2	8	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	3	–	–
Rocky Lin (JAP)	4	–	–
Jin Ho Kim (KOR)	5	1	–
Jack Russell (AUSTRL)	6	–	12
Yodsingh Au Suwannasilp (THAI)	7	–	–
Carlos Rodriguez (VEN)	8	2	1
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	9	–	–
Seo Kjin Yang (KOR)	10	6	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	16	3	–
Saman Sor Jaturong (THAI)	–	5	–
Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan (THAI)	26	7	2
Tomonori Tamura (JAP)	–	9	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	11	10	–
Juan Herrera (COL)	15	–	3
Felix Naranjo (COL)	–	–	4
Jerry Pahayahay (PHIL)	22	–	5
Oscar Flores (COL)	–	–	6
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	–	7
Roger Espanola (PHIL)	–	–	8
Rafael Torres (USA)	–	–	9
Dominggus (INDO)	–	–	10

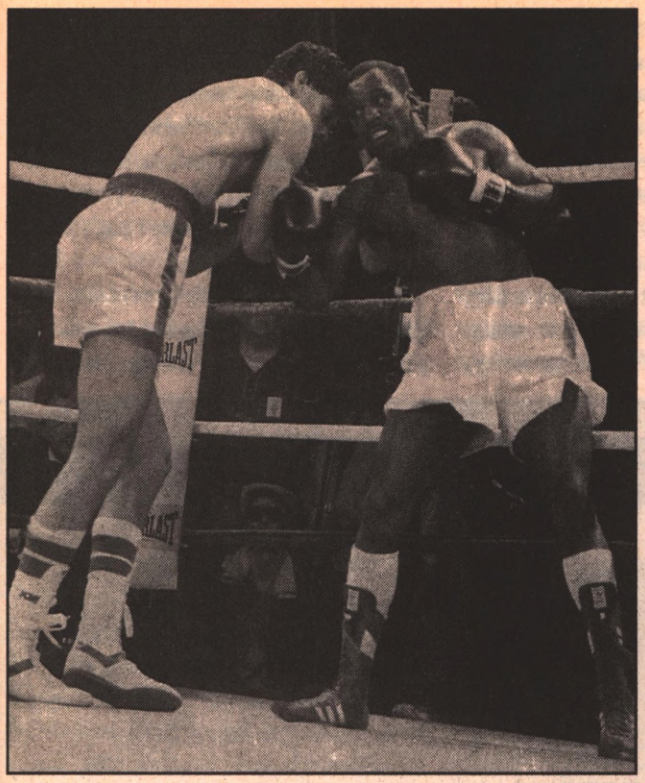
CLASSIC

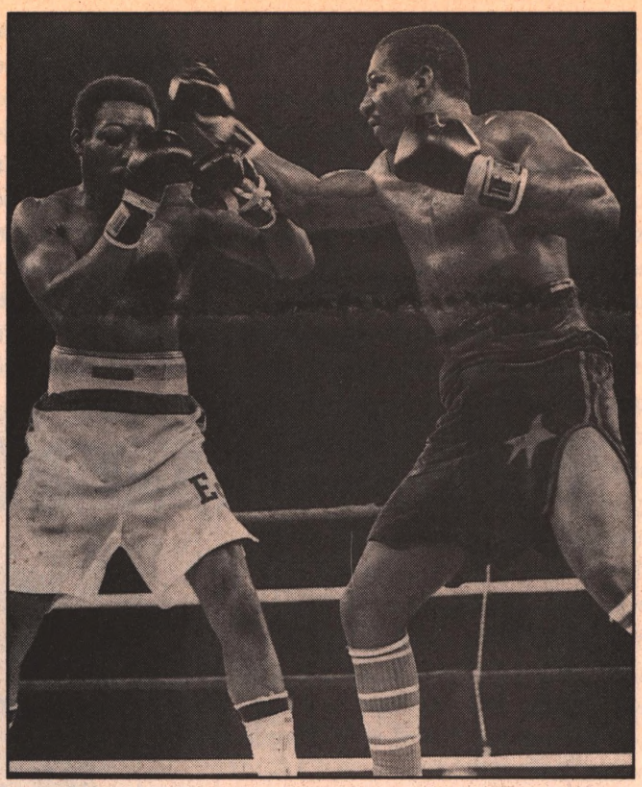
From The Ring, January 1983

FRANK "THE ANIMAL" FLETCHER

On A Prowl For A Perch Atop The Middleweight Division







Fletcher eats punches in every fight, but in 1981 victories against Norberto Sabater (left) and Ernie Singletary (right), "The Animal" did his share of feeding, too. Fletcher is always a hit on TV because every bout is a slugfest full of blood and guts.

By Nigel Collins

Imagine some television network having its own private Dr. Frankenstein hidden in the basement of its Broadcast Row skyscraper. Further fantasize that our mad scientist has been charged with the task of piecing together a perfect fighter for the network's weekly bloodlettings. In all likelihood, the deranged doc would come up with someone (or something) that resembled Frank "The Animal" Fletcher. And who could ask for more? The left-handed middleweight attacks like a killer robot, routinely survives brushes with disaster, bleeds all over the place, and always—at least thus far—comes back to grind his opponent into the canvas.

"There's no way to put on a bad fight with Frank Fletcher," says NBC's own fight doctor, Ferdie Pacheco, who has purchased all of Fletcher's network TV fights. "You are absolutely guaranteed that you're going to have non-stop action. He embodies exactly what you want to see in a television fight: action, incredible bravery, and the ability to bounce back from injury and adversity. He simply makes for great television."

But The Animal is no laboratory monster. As it turns out, he's all too human. Fletcher is a living, fire-breathing creation of one of boxing's most fertile breeding grounds, Philly's teeming black ghetto.

It's not an unfamiliar story, just an especially graphic example. The animal in Fletcher isn't, and never has been, confined strictly to the ring. The very same devil that serves him so well in a brawl has also been the monkey on his back for as long as anyone can remember. But for now, at least, the rage within him has been channeled in a positive direction.

On a recent autumnal afternoon, The Animal strolled into Marty Feldman's gym resplendent in a gray-on-gray ensemble that was color-coordinated from the top of his velour homburg to the tip of his designer shoes. It hasn't always been that way, of course, but Frank can afford all the trappings of success now, even the $21,000 Lincoln Town Car parked outside. He's on a roll, the hottest middleweight contender out there, pulling down six-figure purses for the same sort of mayhem that used to get him locked up.

"In the ring, it's a fight; whether a man beats me or not, we can still be friends," says Fletcher when asked about his ferocity. "I don't have a grudge against nobody in the ring. Out of the ring, I'm just a nice guy. Anything I've got, I'll give to people. But if people try to take advantage of me, then that's a different story. Before I became who I am, I'd just haul off and sock 'em. But now I can't just do that anymore."

But before you walk away believing this man is known as Animal for the same reason the Brothers Grimm called their little characters "Happy," "Sleepy," and "Bashful," let's take a look at the man himself. A *hard* look. This dude is for real, a bona fide bruiser with more entries on the police blotter than in *The Ring Record Book And Encyclopedia.*

There are those so bold as to suggest that Fletcher might have a legitimate chance of (dare we say it?) beating Marvelous Marvin Hagler. Foremost among the believers is Frank's mother. Most fighters' moms want their boys to win, of course, but the flamboyant Lucille Fletcher is in a class by herself. She has become almost as much of a media star as her son. As his most ardent, not to mention noisy, supporter, this attractive and animated lady is inevitably photographed by the ringside TV cameras as she cheers her offspring on to victory, usually in the most rambunctious manner imaginable.

"I know a lot of women who say they just turn on the TV to see Frankie fight so they can see me freaking out," smiles Lucille.

"She certainly can't be ignored," admits Pacheco. "There's no way you're going to put on a Fletcher fight, with all that screaming and hollering that takes place, and not acknowledge

her. She also happens to be a fun type of person and a bright woman."

Like Ray Mancini's father, Lucille Fletcher is also a helpful tool in humanizing a brutal racket for the viewers at home. With so many fighters clamoring for attention, it never hurts to have an extra gimmick going for you. Let's face it, mothers are as American as a good old-fashioned punch in the nose, and Mrs. Fletcher is one mom who would be more than happy to give you one.

"I taught my brother ['60s welterweight contender Dick Turner] how to fight. I had seven brothers who didn't know how to fight, and I taught them all," she laughs with pride. "Coming up, going to school, my grandmother and my mother used to keep me dressed nicely, with long ribbons in my hair. The other girls used to pick on me. There was this fellow, Bobby Gans, and every day, after school, I would go to his house and he would teach me how to fight. I used to fight every day. I used to pick fights just to make sure I could fight. I got so good, they used to call me 'Little Joe Louis.'"

Obviously, much of his mother's pugnacity rubbed off on Frank.

"I always liked to fight when I was a small boy. I could always take care of myself," recalls Frank.

"Frankie's been rough all his life. He never backed off anybody. He's got a lot of heart. Always did," agrees Lucille. "I've seen him tear a pair of steel-toed Brogan shoes up in a week. Yes, sir, he was hard on clothes. I bought more clothes for Frankie than any of my children. You couldn't send Frankie out in his Easter clothes. He'd come back looking like a ragamuffin."

Dubbed "Mamma Animal," Lucille Fletcher is her son's number one fan. She's loud and tough, and we wouldn't bet against her if she were matched up in the ring against some of the top-10 middleweights.

Unfortunately, clothes were not the only things Frank abused. He was only eight when first arrested, and rapidly escalated from there into a full-time thug in his teens and early-'20s.

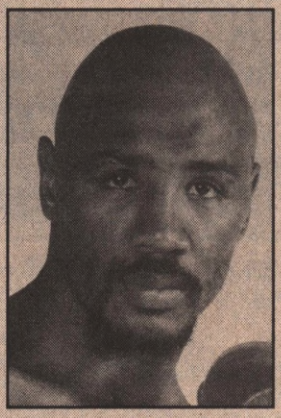
"For 15-20 years, I was in and out of jail," says Fletcher. "Jail was my second home. There was nothing to do. I didn't like working for nobody. I didn't want to get a job. I was stealing, taking things, but there was no guns or nothing. At the time, I thought that was the happenings, you know. Why do most people stay in trouble? Because they like it." *(giggles)*

"You can only raise your children to a certain extent," laments Lucille. "I always told him, 'You've got to reap what you sow. If you make your bed hard, you've got to lay in it.'"

Where, one may wonder, was Frank's father during these troubled years?

"They're not together. My father used to be a fighter, too. The first fight he lost was with my mother," chuckled Frank. "A long time ago, a

THE RING RATINGS, *January 1983*



Marvin Hagler

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA**

1. **Michael Dokes**, Akron, OH
2. **Mike Weaver***, Los Angeles, CA
3. **Gerrie Coetzee**, South Africa
4. **Renaldo Snipes**, Yonkers, NY
5. **Trevor Berbick**, Canada
6. **Greg Page**, Louisville, KY
7. **Gerry Cooney**, Huntington, NY
8. **Pinklon Thomas**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **Randall (Tex) Cobb**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Dwight Braxton, Camden, NJ**

1. **Michael Spinks***, St. Louis, MO
2. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
3. **Matthew Saad Muhammad**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Eddie Davis**, Freeport, NY
5. **Jerry Celestine**, New Orleans, LA
6. **John Davis**, Hempstead, NY
7. **Carlos DeLeon**, Puerto Rico
8. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
9. **Willie Edwards**, Detroit, MI
10. **James Scott**, Rahway, NJ

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA

1. **Frank Fletcher**, Philadelphia, PA
2. **Tony Sibson**, England
3. **Mustafa Hamsho**, Syria
4. **Dwight Davison**, Detroit, MI
5. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
6. **Wilford Scypion**, Port Arthur, TX
7. **Fulgencio Obelmejias**, Venezuela
8. **James Shuler**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **James Green**, Irvington, NJ
10. **Bobby Czyz**, Wanaque, NJ

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Title Vacant

1. **Wilfred Benitez****, Puerto Rico
2. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
3. **Tony Ayala Jr.**, San Antonio, TX
4. **Davey Moore***, New York, NY
5. **Carlos Herrera**, Argentina
6. **Mike McCallum**, New York, NY
7. **Gary Guiden**, Muncie, IN
8. **Clint Jackson**, Nashville, TN
9. **James Green**, Irvington, NJ
10. **Ayub Kalule**, Uganda

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Title Vacant

1. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI

lady he used to go with tried to poison him, or something like that. He went through seizures and almost died. His mind comes and goes now."

If The Animal inherited his brawling nature from his mother, his father seems to have left him a legacy of women troubles, despite Frank's protests to the contrary.

"I know how to run women," he says. "At least I think I know how to run 'em. Maybe in the past, some young lady that I might mess with thinks she's too slick for me. But she just don't know. Before, a long time ago, I might have busted her in the face."

It was one such incident that put Frank back behind bars for a particularly lengthy spell.

"Some young lady said I jumped on her, or something like that," said Fletcher. "Me and her used to go together before I was a fighter. I did two years in Camp Hill and then I got out. I had to stay out of jail. I had three kids, and I didn't want no other man taking care of my kids. A long time ago, my mother came to visit me in jail and said, 'All your brothers, they're boxing.' So when I came out in 1975, I took it up."

"All the guy needed was a little help, that's all," says Feldman, who, along with the Rev. Elvin Thompson, trains and co-manages Fletcher. Marty, a former pro middleweight, should know. He claims to have been in a few "minor" scrapes with the law himself.

"Fifteen years ago, I fought 40 cops on 39th Street," says Feldman, still a powerful-looking man despite recent hip surgery. "Seven of them

2. **Donald Curry**, Fort Worth, TX
3. **Roger Stafford**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Marlon Starling**, Hartford, CT
5. **Pipino Cuevas**, Mexico
6. **Kevin Howard**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Colin Jones**, Wales
8. **Bobby Joe Young**, Steubenville, OH
9. **Mauricio Bravo**, Venezuela
10. **Elio Diaz**, Venezuela

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Aaron Pryor*, Cincinnati, OH

1. **Leroy Haley****, Las Vegas, NV
2. **Saoul Mamby**, New York, NY
3. **Johnny Bumphus**, Clementon, NJ
4. **Steve Hearon**, Houston, TX
5. **Ronnie Shields**, Port Arthur, TX
6. **Sang Hyun Kim**, South Korea
7. **Guillermo Fernandez**, Venezuela
8. **Ubaldo Sacco**, Argentina
9. **Billy Costello**, Kingston, NY
10. **Willie Rodriguez**, Allentown, PA

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alexis Arguello**, Nicaragua

1. **Aaron Pryor**, Cincinnati, OH
2. **Ray Mancini***, Youngstown, OH
3. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
4. **Howard Davis Jr.**, Glen Cove, NY
5. **Andy Ganigan**, Honolulu, HI
6. **Gonzalo Montellano**, Bakersfield, CA
7. **Greg Coverson**, Kalamazoo, MI
8. **Roberto Elizondo**, Corpus Christi, TX
9. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Livingstone Bramble**, Passaic, NJ

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Samuel Serrano*, Puerto Rico

1. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**, England
2. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
3. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon****, Mexico
4. **Hector Camacho**, New York, NY
5. **Rolando Navarette**, Honolulu, HI
6. **Bobby Chacon**, Pacoima, CA
7. **Johnny De La Rosa**, Miami, FL
8. **Jorge Alvarado**, Panama
9. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Chung Il Choi**, South Korea

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eusebio Pedroza*, Panama

1. **Juan LaPorte****, New York, NY
2. **Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Rocky Lockridge**, Paterson, NJ
4. **Ruben Castillo**, Bakersfield, CA
5. **Jose Caba**, Dominican Republic
6. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
7. **Mario Miranda**, Colombia
8. **Pat Cowdell**, England
9. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
10. **Jackie Beard**, Detroit, MI

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico

1. **Leo Cruz***, Dominican Republic
2. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
3. **Sergio Palma**, Argentina
4. **Mike Ayala**, New York, NY
5. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico
6. **Ricardo Cardona**, Colombia
7. **Felipe Orozco**, Colombia
8. **Roberto Rubaldino**, Mexico
9. **Juan (Kid) Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Soon Hyun Chung**, South Korea

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jeff Chandler*, Philadelphia, PA

1. **Lupe Pintor****, Mexico
2. **Chul Ho Kim**, South Korea
3. **Albert Davila**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Oscar Muniz**, Los Angeles, CA
5. **Edgar Roman**, Venezuela
6. **Jiro Watanabe**, Japan
7. **Freddie Jackson**, Houston, TX
8. **Gaby Canizales**, Laredo, TX
9. **Eijiro Murata**, Japan
10. **Kiko Bejines**, Mexico

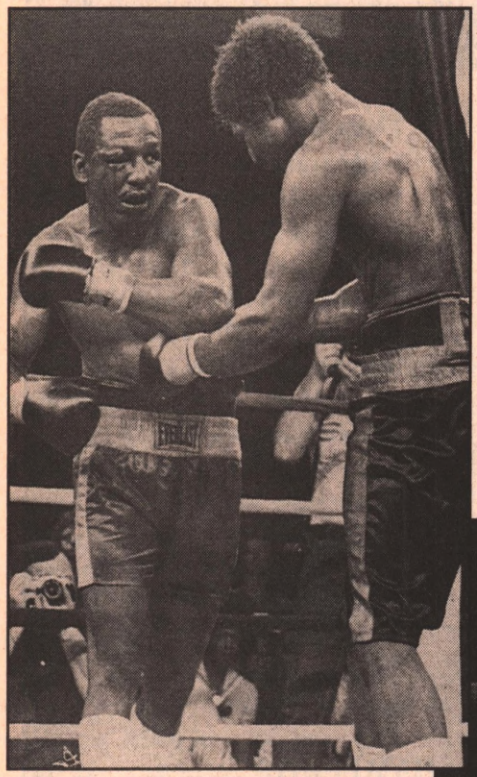
FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eleoncio Mercedes**, Dominican Republic

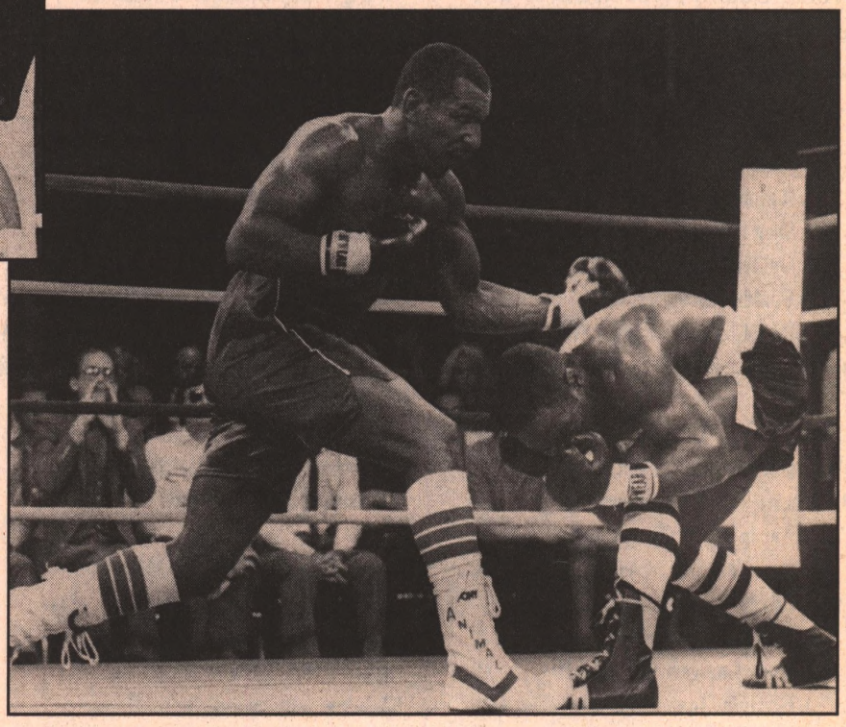
1. **Santos Laciar***, Argentina
2. **Freddy Castillo**, Mexico
3. **Prudencio Cardona**, Colombia
4. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
5. **Katsuo Tokashiki**, Japan
6. **Tadashi Tomori**, Japan
7. **German Torres**, Mexico
8. **Antonio Avelar**, Mexico
9. **Hwan Jin Kim**, South Korea
10. **Jung Koo Chang**, South Korea

*WBA Champ **WBC Champ

made it to the hospital needing casts."

There was no instant success for Fletcher, no high-powered business syndicate to back his career. The last thing anyone would consider The Animal to be would be another Sugar Ray Leonard. In fact, he wasn't even known as The Animal at first. He turned pro in Allentown under the name of Monty "Honeyboy" Montez, scoring a four-round decision over Charles Stern. That was in October 1976, and in the next three years he managed to obtain only six more bouts, compiling a less than awesome record of 3-2-1.





Fletcher's June 1982 war with fellow southpaw Clint Jackson (left) was one of the most brutal bouts in Atlantic City fight history. While James "Hard Rock" Green proved a small target (below), Fletcher punished him en route to a sixth-round TKO victory. The Animal seems headed for a try at undisputed middleweight champion Marvin Hagler.

Frank was a mere $200 preliminary fighter, and nothing more.

"I wasn't really serious about boxing at the time," he says. "Who can get serious if you're going to fight only once or twice a year?"

Then came the ESPN tournament and the break Fletcher was waiting for. Even then, he sneaked in the back door when one of the original tourney seeds dropped out. Frank outpointed iron-chinned Ben Serrano in the opening eliminations and then proceeded to cream Jerome "Silky" Jackson (KO 5), William "Caveman" Lee (KO 4), and Randy McGrady (KO 7) to capture the TV title. He was finally on his way to somewhere besides the slammer.

The savage knockout of Jackson also brought him more—it earned him his nickname. The favored Silky took 10 stitches in his lower lip and spent the night in the hospital for observation after Fletcher chewed him up and spit out the pieces. Frank's uncompromising, let-it-all-hang-out style had emerged, and there was no turning back. From then on, it was kill or be killed. He seemed caught up in the Saad Muhammad Syndrome, and fans and matchmakers alike ate it up.

The Animal's reputation took on added credibility when he destroyed kayo artist Sammy Nesmith, who was still a ranked fighter at the time, in six blood-splattered rounds. It marked the first of three times he has been the winning participant in THE RING's Fight of the Month.

Following record-padding wins over Robert Davis (KO 3) and Sugar Ray Phillips (KO 2), Fletcher won the vacant USBA middleweight crown in a thrilling 10-round war with Norberto Sabater in June 1981. Sabater hasn't been the same since, but The Animal has gone on to defend the belt four times, each one of them remarkable in its own right.

None of his challengers has been the kind to roll over and play dead. In each defense, Fletcher was bashed and gashed before prevailing in the finest tradition of the game's legendary sluggers. Ernie Singletary (KO 8), Tony Braxton (W 12), Clint Jackson (W 12), and James "Hard Rock" Green (KO 6) all tried to keep up with The Animal's frantic pace. All failed. In the end, it's been Frank's unflagging courage and intense desire to win that have overcome his often more skillful adversaries.

"I'm not a dirty fighter; I don't like fighting dirty," says Frank. "That's why when I fight a guy, I don't tie him up. I hear my corner hollering, 'Tie him up, hold on!' but I come to fight. I don't come to do no ballet, no dancing. Let's get it over with. We're here to fight. You come to beat me. I come to beat you. May the best man win."

It is a philosophy that has endeared The Animal to the fans, but has also led to the ugly and perplexing problem of frequent eye damage. It has become an issue of increasing worry, as Fletcher, THE RING's number-one ranked contender, inches closer and closer to a shot at Hagler.

"He just makes every fight tough," says Fletcher's promoter, Russell Peltz. "There's no such thing as an easy fight for Frank. My opinion is that he can't afford any warm-up fights with his style. It just doesn't pay. Anybody can poke him in the eye and open a cut. It could happen in a little $5,000 fight as easily as a big one."

Naturally, television packager Pacheco, who, like nature, abhors a vacuum, and whose main objective is to fill TV dates with attractive fights,

sees things from a different perspective.

"Peltz is a natural pessimist," Pacheco says. "He keeps looking for this guy to fall apart, but he hasn't. He's getting stronger and stronger, more confident and more confident. Stick a pin in any of the top 20 middleweights and I'll make a fight with Fletcher. He can't afford to get stale."

Not all of the marks on The Animal's rather lived-in face come from the ring. His front teeth were dislodged in a jail-house fracas with Bobby Drewrey, another incarcerated boxer.

"He didn't knock them out, he knocked them loose with a right-left," explains Fletcher, refighting the battle with his hands as he speaks. "I said, 'Hold it,' and pulled them out, threw them down, and said, '*Now* we're gonna fight.' Then I started dogging him."

The vivid scar that runs across his nose is a souvenir picked up on the streets.

"A left hook and a right razor," quips Feldman, adding to the bad-ass image both fighter and manager cultivate.

With all of his bravado, Fletcher is a happy-go-lucky free spirit who seldom hesitates to reveal his inner feelings with surprising candor.

"Like most people, I never really had any idea that I would be who I am today," he says. "I knew it wasn't meant for me to kill anybody and go to jail for the rest of my life. It wasn't only because I didn't want it that way. It's because God didn't want it that way. Because I am who I am. I give thanks to Marty Feldman, Rev. Elvin Thompson, and my uncle Dick Turner. Otherwise, if it was left up to me, I'd probably be back in jail."

If he's not careful, that's just where he might end up. It seems trouble courts The Animal the way his face invites punches. He simply refuses to back down. Two days after we talked, Frank was arrested by the Philadelphia police for disorderly conduct. Seems he was having a verbal dispute with an old acquaintance outside a barroom when the police intervened. One thing led to another, and before you could say controversial decision, The Animal was back in the clink.

"My daughter's mother just happens to be a young lady that keeps writing nasty things on my windows," protests Fletcher. "I'm not the kind of guy that goes looking for a person. I just say, 'Well, when I see her, then we'll talk about it.' That night I went up to Chester Avenue and accidentally saw her. If she had stood still, I wouldn't have run after her. I wasn't harassing her or nothing like that. All of a sudden two cops come from nowhere. The black cop pushed me into the white cop, and he tried to break my arm by bending it behind me. And that's when the black cop threw my other arm on top of the car and put the handcuffs on. That's when we got to cursing."

Fortunately for all involved, cursing was as far as it went this time. No physical damage was perpetrated by either party. All in a night's work for the Philly police. And, it seems, only a triviality as far as Fletcher and his camp are concerned.

"It's all bull," insists Feldman. "They harassed the guy. The guy don't bother anybody. How bleeping serious can it be?"

"What it's really all about is that I won't let them talk to me any old way," says Fletcher. "I give them respect because they're police officers. All Philadelphia police are not bad. Some just ride up on me for my autograph. But I don't let anybody, not a police officer or anybody, talk to me any old way."

Which just proves that in or out of the ring, you can't take the animal out of Frank Fletcher. The beast is always there, lurking just beneath the surface of his affable facade, ready to explode at the slightest provocation. Conventional wisdom says Hagler should be the man to tame him, but don't be too sure. 1983 just might be The Year of the Animal. ■

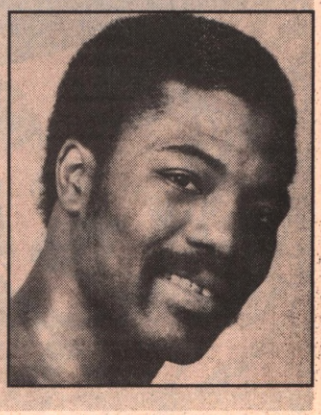
THE RING, January 1983

The Cover: The upcoming light heavyweight unification battle between WBA champion Michael Spinks and WBC champion and cover subject Dwight Braxton is the biggest bout in division history. In an exclusive preview, both titlists reveal how they plan to emerge victorious.

Pryor-Arguello: When WBA junior welterweight champion Aaron Pryor halted three-division titlist Alexis Arguello in Miami, boxing writers immediately declared the bout Fight of the Year. In fact, it turned out to be the Fight of the Decade, and THE RING was ringside.

Anatomy Of A Death: "Why do fighters die in the ring?" asks Jack Newfield, who examines the death of South Korean lightweight Duk Koo Kim. In a nationally televised bout, Kim succumbed in the 14th round to the powerpunches of WBA lightweight champion Ray Mancini.

A Boxing Original: In a lengthy nostalgia piece, THE RING looks at colorful welterweight Al "Bummy" Davis, who emerged from Brownsville, Brooklyn, and became one of the world's top welterweights. In 1945, Davis was murdered during a holdup at a bar. He was 27.



Fighter Of The Month: An easy choice. An underdog in the biggest fight of his career, Aaron Pryor boxed brilliantly, absorbed the hammers of kayo puncher Alexis Arguello, and finished with a late-rounds explosion en route to scoring an unforgettable 14th-round kayo.

Looking Ahead

By Steve Farhood

"BOOM BOOM" MAKING NOISE

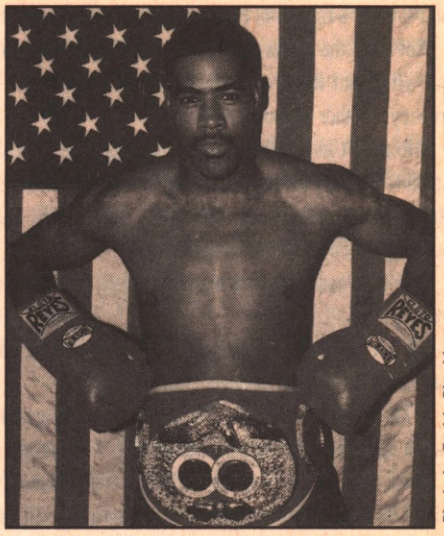


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Johnson is now a stablemate of Toney

IBF featherweight champion Tom "Boom Boom" Johnson has signed with Detroit-based Jackie Kallen. Given the way Kallen has moved IBF super middleweight champion James Toney, it's likely Johnson, one of boxing's least appreciated champions, will finally secure some recognition.

"I'm a home for the fighters who have no homes," says Kallen. "He came to me because he sees what we're doing. He said, 'Maybe you can help me.' He wanted to be part of a group. And he gets along great with James."

As we went to press, Johnson was scheduled for an October defense against mandatory challenger Pancho Segura. If he wins, and if WBC 126-pound champion Kevin Kelley gets by Vida Ramos and possibly Mexico's Alejandro Gonzalez, Kallen promised a unification bout on HBO in March.

When reminded that Johnson's two prior managers had been murdered, boxing's leading lady said, "The Tom Johnson jinx stops here."

"JAKE THE SNAKE": TOUGH TO SHAKE

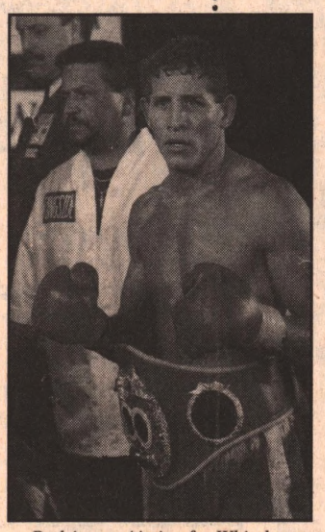


Photo by Gary Thibeault

Rodriguez: Aiming for Whitaker

Almost as soon as Jake Rodriguez won the IBF junior welterweight title by upsetting 20-1 favorite Charles Murray, insiders labeled him the least talented world champion in boxing. It's time to reconsider. The southpaw has made two successful defenses, and his manager, Dave Burke, is now looking toward a showdown with WBC welterweight champion Pernell Whitaker. (As we went to press, Whitaker was scheduled to defend against Buddy McGirt.)

Whitaker-Rodriguez is an interesting matchup because, in preparation for his challenge of Murray, "Jake The Snake" sparred with "Sweet Pea."

"I've been talking to Lou [Duva], and if the promoters can get together, we'll do it in February," says Burke. "When they sparred, Whitaker wasn't exactly running Jake out of the ring. In fact, there were days when Jake got the better of it."

Rodriguez would be a huge underdog against Whitaker. The Long Islander wouldn't be expected to defeat Australia-based mandatory challenger Kostya Tszyu (13-0), either. Says Burke of a Rodriguez-Tszyu matchup, "We make him come here. He wants the fight, he comes here ... unless they come up with an exorbitant fee."

LISTEN UP

It's a frustrating time for newly crowned WBC light heavyweight champion **Mike McCallum**. The 37-year-old triple-crown titlist wants a unification bout with WBA champion **Virgil Hill**, but according to McCallum's lawyer, **Milt Chwasky**, "Don King [Hill's promoter] has too many other things he's worrying about," including his indictment for insurance fraud. After McCallum dethroned **Jeff Harding** in July, there was talk that a showdown with Hill would occur before the end of the year. "Mike's not getting any younger," reminds Chwasky ... With IBF middleweight champion **Roy Jones** moving up to challenge 168-pound champion **James Toney**, look for **Bernard Hopkins** and Ecuador's **Segundo Mercado** to duke it out for the vacant title. ■

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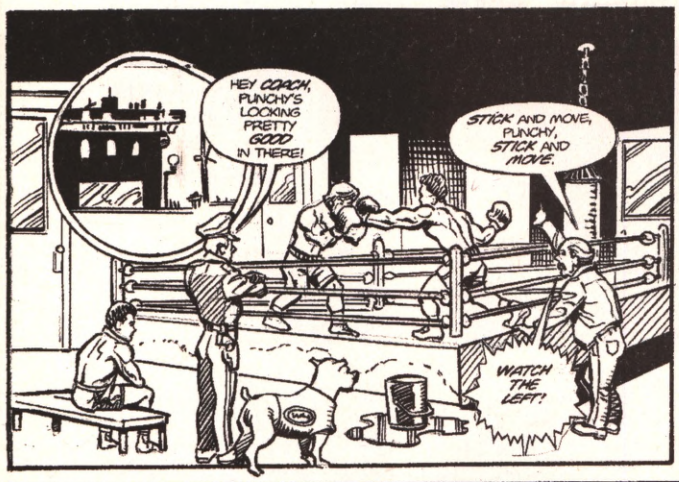

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